

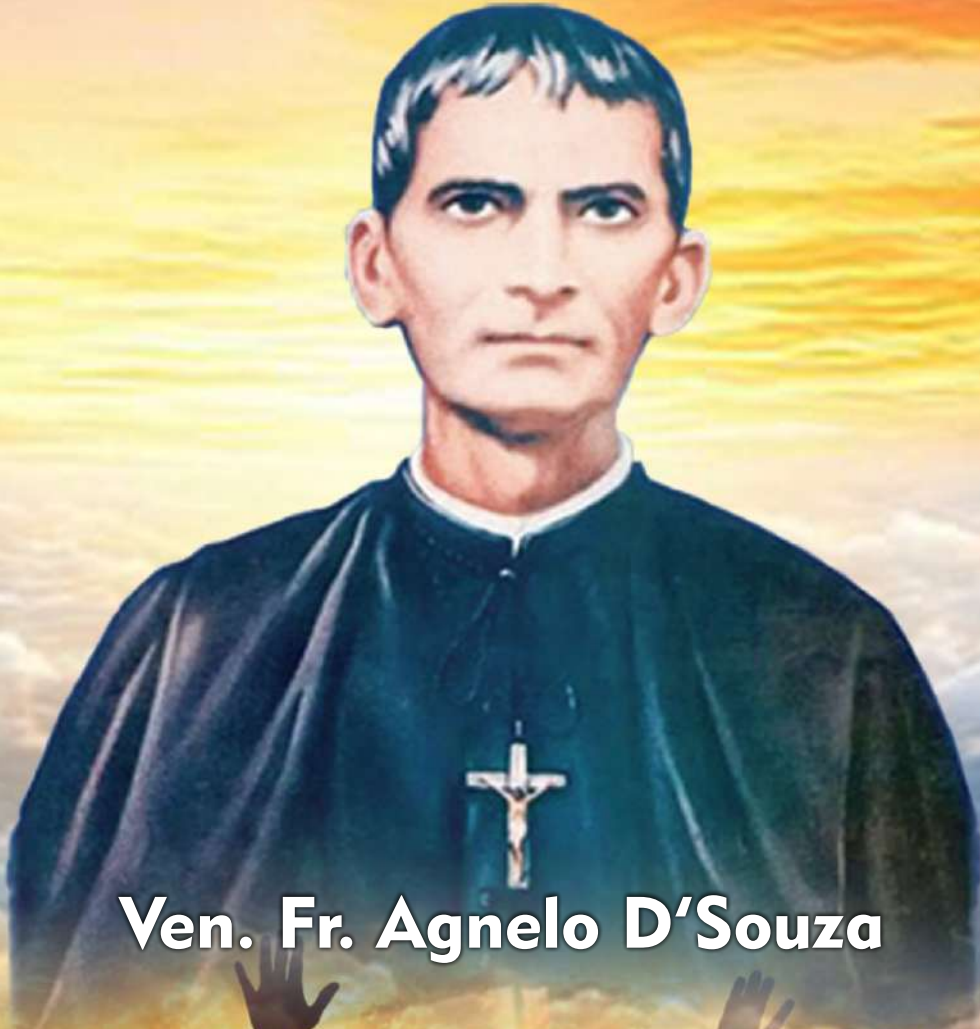


LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

November 2025



Ven. Fr. Agnelo D'Souza

A life of holiness and selfless service!

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

NOVEMBER 2025

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VEN. FR. AGNELO'S 98TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY Thursday, 20th November 2025

PROGRAMME

SPECIAL NOVENA SERVICES | 11TH TO 19TH NOVEMBER 2025



Every day

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

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

N.B.

On 16th November, all Masses and Novena Services will be held as on normal Sundays.



20TH NOVEMBER (THURSDAY) : 98TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF VENERABLE FR. AGNELO

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

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



Most Rev. Theodore Mascarenhas, SFX, Bishop of Daltonganj, Jharkhand will be the main Celebrant on 20th November 2025.



Thousands of devotees will participate in this Annual Novena and celebration. Over one lakh of favours, some of them truly miraculous such as cure of cancer, T.B., Paralysis etc. have been received through the powerful intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnelo. Favours obtained and petitions to be placed at the Shrine of Ven. Fr. Agnelo may be sent to the following address:



Rev. Fr. Superior

FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

P.B. No. 6656, Bandstand, Bandra (West), Mumbai – 400 050, Maharashtra, India.

Tel.: 022 - 67114000 | Mobile: 091 - 7738009137

Website : www.agnelashram.org



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

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL SUPERIOR



On 20th November 2025, we commemorate the 98th Death Anniversary of Ven. Fr. Agnelo D'Souza, a member of the Society of the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier (SFX), Pilar, Goa who has inspired us with his exemplary holy life of prayer and service.

Ven. Fr. Agnel is known for his work with children, which included preaching and teaching them catechism from a young age. Even as a child himself, he would gather neighbourhood children to repeat Sunday sermons and stories, and his apostolate as a teacher continued when he began his journey as a missionary.

Later, as a priest, he would help the poor and the community. The Pilar Fathers continue the legacy of service with Balbhavan centres at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandstand - Bandra, Mumbai, Verna in Goa, Vashi in Navi Mumbai, Greater Noida and Pune. We also have social service centres such as Jan Kalyan Kendra in Khoda, Ghaziabad and Vidya Ankur Vikas Basti Kendra in Badarpur, South Delhi.

In India, Children's Day is celebrated on 14th November. The Agnel institutes across India are known for imparting the highest standard of education to children, right from Fr. Agnel Schools to degree colleges and specialised courses.

Furthermore, on 17th November is International Student's Day. We strive towards empowering students with knowledge and world-class facilities.

We celebrate International Men's Day on 19th November, 2025. We salute their zeal, dedication and passion, to make a difference in life. They may be our dad, our mentor, guiding us on the path of success.

I take this opportunity to wish each of you a Happy Feast of Ven. Fr. Agnelo and Christ the King!

- Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho
Regional Superior

COMING TIME AND TIME FOR COMING

-Fr. Peter Fernandes, SFX

What is coming, and who is coming? The coming times are normally not within the range of human gaze; however, there have been seers and prophets who could look into the future and advise and warn human society of the coming times. The veracity of the seers depends on the fulfilment of their writings. The future is unknown, and the unknown holds the tension of the unknown future. Mind governs the human existence. Humans normally live in their past (the past exists only in the mind) and look into the future (the future also exists only in the mind), often failing to live in the present, mainly because the lessons from the past are not learned, which keeps repeating, and they hope for a better future with an uncertain mind.

These days, one of the most noted headlines around the world is 'the end times are coming.' Should human society give heed to such a headline and be concerned about it? Does the present scenario give reason to believe that these headlines are not just sensational but have substance? Many seers and most religions teach that specific signs will precede these events, including increased natural disasters, global wars, and societal moral decline, though most emphasize that no one can know the exact timing of these events.

However, one thing is sure: as philosophers believe and scientists confirm, matter and material things will corrupt someday; that is, all things will come to an end. In outer space there is a phenomenon called a 'black hole' that consumes things with less gravity. 'Black Hole' has the power to annihilate the material beings, but not immaterial substance. And humans are endowed with an immaterial rational soul. For that reason, many religious traditions encourage people to be prepared and watchful but also to avoid setting dates for the end times, as these are

considered unknowable. And yet, all are given the intuition to read the signs of time.

As it is noted that nature cleans itself. In the last two centuries, particularly with the coming of the industrial revolution, the natural world has been violated severely. It is unfortunate, but true, that humans allowed pride to govern the human society and the natural world, unaware that it is beyond their power to comprehend the grand plan of the creator. Suddenly, the most sophisticated minds are speaking of 'Global Warming'. Sadly, it appears to be true that science has failed the human society. It is also true that the Earth will eventually heal itself, but the process can take a very long time, especially after significant damage. Such a process has been recorded in history books as well as in sacred texts.



The end of the dinosaurs' age is well established as the end of an era that fascinates the human minds as they try to recreate such a world of dinosaurs - 'Jurassic Park.' Most environmental scientists concur that the last ice age ended about ten thousand some years ago. The floods during

the time of Noah, as noted in the Bible, were part of the system of the earth to heal itself. The deluge of such proportion certainly caught the evil humans unaware and gave the natural world a start for a new beginning. The unprecedented storms and natural disasters in the recent past have caught the attention not only of the scientists and learned minds but also of the ordinary people, living in the most remote corners of the earth. The million-dollar question: can humans reverse the damage done to the natural world? Yes indeed. God declares, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

As good stewards, and to avoid further damage and accelerate the healing process, humans must actively reduce pollution, manage forests and farmlands to store carbon, and adopt sustainable practices. Consequently, if we don't give heed to the clarion call for a change of the mode of operation, the coming of the global natural disaster is unavoidable, say the most informed and learned minds.

Look at the social and moral fabric. The contemporary society has allowed itself to be governed by the dictatorship of moral relativism that has distorted truth and justice, the order established by the creator. Why is God driven out from the society; is it fair for humans to do such a thing? Can God be kept out of the society, or is it time for God to return back? Humans have witnessed Aids pandemic that destroyed so many lives and families.

Abortions are another pandemic that is ravaging human society as innocent lives are destroyed by those who have illegally and illegitimately usurped the power that belongs to God and God alone. Several countries around the world have legalized abortions as a new normal for moral contours without feeling a twinge in their conscience. The voice of conscience is the eternal echo that reverberates within the human heart, mind, and soul to choose good and avoid evil. When humans condescend to such a level, the eternal mind cannot and will not hold but will certainly restore the natural order.

The other immoral pandemic that is infesting human society is the 'same-sex relationship.' How could humans fail to decipher the natural order? The book of Genesis reminds us that in the beginning God created them male and female and blessed them. God intentionally created humanity as male and female, each with unique roles and purposes. This design reflects His wisdom and should be respected. When human minds always desire to know the truth, why and how did it end with falsehood and errors?

The irony and tragedy of the contemporary society is that instead of celebrating truth and objective morality, they are parading falsehood and errors with multi-coloured flags. How long will this

society continue to live with error before the coming of the truth - the one who created the natural order?

Among all the writing of seers and prophets, the most significant are those found in the Bible. No other text, sacred or secular, can make a claim for the fulfilment of the prophecy as the Bible does about the coming of Jesus, the saviour of the world. The fulfilment of the ancient prophecies about Jesus is the assurance and certainty of the faith of the believers in Jesus Christ - the promised Messiah.

The phrase "The fulfilment of the first coming means the second coming is also certain." The headlines around the world, "The end times are upon us," confirm the belief of the church and are a reminder for the whole of humanity to prepare for the same. Because, as the prophets have foretold what will precede the second coming of Jesus, humanity is witnessing as the headlines are confirming the fulfilment of the prophets' teachings. First there will be the degradation of morality and religion, denial of truth, and exultation of false teaching and errors. The contemporary society is living this scenario with full affirmation, like that in the times of Noah. There will be natural disasters, as some experts are predicting; expect an increase in earthquakes, devastating storms, lightning, and hail.

Similarly, there will be cosmic changes: the sun and moon will be darkened, and stars will appear to "fall from heaven." War and Conflict, as nations will go to war, leading to widespread conflict, economic chaos, and destruction. Plagues and famine, disease, drought, and hunger will affect the earth.

We are living in a fearful present, and the future appears ominous. The human society is at the crossroads, confusingly looking towards a threshold for a new era to start. Yes indeed, for those who try to do good and live by faith and hope, the new era will culminate in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, where God's promises are fulfilled.



Fr. Peter Fernandes is Incharge of the Bursar's Desk at Pilar, Goa. He is a regular contributor of articles to various publications. His contact: petfern85@gmail.com

VEN. AGNELO: LOVING PASTOR WHO SMELT HIS SHEEP

-Fr Eusebio Gomes, SFX

Goa is known as 'Rome of the East' which is blessed with so many Churches, Chapels, Convents, Seminaries, Oratories, a Basilica and a Cathedral. It is a cradle of vocations as many priests and nuns born on the Goan soil have served in the past and presently been serving in various missions of India and overseas.

One of the sons of the soil is Ven. Agnelo de Souza from Anjuna, a village of scenic beauty that was Christianised by Franciscan Capuchin missionaries from the west. He was born on January 21, 1869, the same year of Mahatma Gandhi's birth and named as Agnelo Gustavo Adolfo de Souza. It was the feast day of St. Agnes, therefore he was named as 'Agnel' which came from this saint which etymologically means 'lamb' from the Latin word 'agnus'. This year on November 20, we commemorate his 98th death anniversary.

Vocation to Priesthood

Ven. Agnelo's vocation to priesthood was nurtured at home in his family which was pious and well respected in the village. Heeding the call of God, he joined the diocesan seminary to be a priest. He completed his theological studies at Rachol Seminary in 1893.

Later, he made up his mind to join the Society of Pilar that had made its headquarters at Pilar. He joined the Society of Pilar as a postulant on July 17, 1897 and was ordained a priest by Archbishop-Patriarch of Goa Dom António Sebastião Valente at See Cathedral in Old Goa on September 24, 1898. Ven. Agnelo spent 10 years of his priesthood (1898-1908) in the Pilar Monastery spending long hours late in the night before the Blessed Sacrament in the mystical union with the Lord. These 10 years in the Monastery refined him spiritually, strengthened his moral life and equipped him intellectually with wisdom to carry out the arduous missionary work ahead in the remote areas of Goa in the New Conquests.

Shepherd to Parishioners

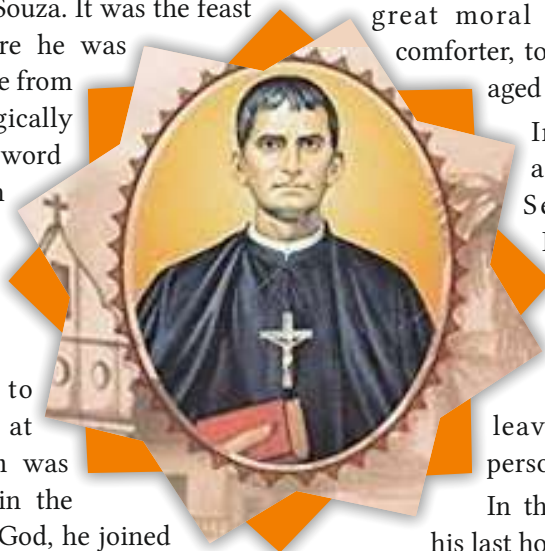
From 1910 to 1917, Ven. Agnelo served in the parish of Kumta in Karnataka. The parishioners became his family. He was their compassionate pastor. He spent his time in visiting the families, placing his healing hands on the sick and praying for them and counselling the distressed members of the family.

As a loving pastor he smelt his sheep. He was polite and gentle with his parishioners. He also shepherded in the parishes of Shiroda and Sanvordem and was never callous to his sheep. To the orphans he was a loving father, to the widows a great moral support, to the lonely a comforter, to the sick a healer and to the aged their friend.

In 1918, Ven. Agnelo was appointed at the Rachol Seminary as a Spiritual Director for the candidates to priesthood and lived there till his death. He helped some of the seminarians who were at the verge of leaving the seminary due to personal crisis.

In the seminary while preaching his last homily of nine-day Novenas on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he fell on the pulpit and passed away the next day at dawn on November 20, 1927. There was not a single shirt in his trunk to dress him up for the burial; it was borrowed from another priest. Whatever belongings he had were given to the poor and needy.

Ven. Agnelo made his mark as a preacher and was sought after for preaching novenas, retreats and missions in Goa and also outside Goa. He was a fiery preacher, in the pulpit he roared like a lion but in the confessional he was meek as a lamb true to his name. When someone remarked about his powerful preaching and meekness in the confessional, his prompt reply was: "From the pulpit we throw our nets for catch. In the confessional, we collect the catch." In his times, the Confrarias were invested



with the evils of caste distinction and class discrimination. In his sermons, he never spared those who insisted on the superiority of caste. He asserted that God is our Father and we are his children.

Lighthouse of Virtues

On November 10, 1986, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints at Vatican passed a Decree and declared Fr Agnelo, the Servant of God as Venerable. The process for his beatification is underway. Ven. Agnelo was a lighthouse of virtues from whose life emanated humility, simplicity, calmness, love, truth, justice, kindness and compassion. As a lighthouse guides the ships in the seas at night to reach the dock, Ven. Agnelo guides the persons lost in life's darkness to reach the port of spiritual enlightenment. He surrendered completely to his Master Jesus and sacrificed his life at the altar of service to humanity. So many people receive favours through his intercession.

There are many extraordinary cases in which the persons are healed without any medical aid that happened through Ven. Agnelo's intercession. There are four steps to canonise a person saint: Ven. Agnelo has already crossed two steps i.e. Servant of God and Venerable. The other two steps of Beatification and Canonisation are left for which there is need of authentic miracles. **The devotees of Ven. Agnelo are fervently praying that the church in Goa may get soon the second son of the soil declared a saint after our Goan Saint Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Ceylon.**



Fr. Eusebio Gomes is an Assistant Parish Priest of Holy Rosary Church, Bathinda, Punjab. He writes for various publications, including Konkani journals. His contact: gomesgoa27@gmail.com



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Hazel Perpetual D'Souza, Andheri, Mumbai

I am happy to sponsor an amount of Rs 10,000 via NEFT to fulfil the requirements of the Balbhavan boys.

Jacob Puthur, Malad, Mumbai

I have sent a donation of Rs.5000 for the daily needs of the Balbhavan boys. They are being well cared for by the Pilar Fathers.

Kurian Thomas, Ernakulam

It gives me great pleasure to contribute an amount of Rs. 3000 via cheque for the Balbhavan boys. They are excelling in studies, music and sports. The encouragement and training provided by the Pilar Fathers and their teachers are working wonders.

Nixon Michael Raj, Navi Mumbai

I am happy to contribute an amount of Rs. 5000 towards the medical expenses of the Balbhavan boys. They are growing up well and acquiring new skills for a brighter tomorrow.

Antony David, Chennai

I am contributing an amount of Rs.2000 towards the daily needs of Balbhavan boys.

Joyce Sagar Jamble, Malad

We are happy to donate an amount of Rs. 1000 for the Balbhavan boys. I was quite impressed by their creative skills on display at the Bandra Feast Fair at Fr. Agnel Ashram. The paintings, baskets and other works of art were simply amazing.

Jefferson Aloishias Saldanha, Malad

I am pleased to make my monthly donation of Rs 1000 towards the welfare of Balbhavan boys. They are good in playing various musical instruments and I am looking forward to their performance, on the occasion of the 98th Death Anniversary of Ven. Fr. Agnel on 20th November 2025.

Dr. Niket Shastri, Anand, Gujarat

I have sent a thanksgiving offering of an amount of Rs.5000 for the educational expenses of the Balbhavan boys.

ARE WE ALL SAINTS... ?

-Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

The collective Feast of ALL Saints (Nov 1) and the feasts of innumerable popular individual saints in November, reminds us of Jesus' conundrum, "when the Son of Man comes again, will he find faith on earth?"

I am frequently asked by well-meaning young women/men about God and the Divine Presence/influence in today's ultra-secular world. It is not so much a question of their overall belief in God but about the "mystery" of God's influence on people of faith doing (sometimes, or habitually) very bad or very good things!

Is God dead to it all? Or is God alive in every circumstance? Of course God is never dead! But what else is a non-theologian lay person, who is moreover a youth, to believe when, for example, thousands of helpless women, children and men are daily being killed by horrific bombs, or less recently, 6 million Jews tortured to death by the Nazis, so that Nietzsche, a famous German philosopher, could not but cry out in acute anguish and loss of hope, "GOD IS DEAD"?

The disciple's response (of faith) must be, simply, "DON'T BLAME GOD!" Jesus himself suggested this attitude when asked about the weeds found springing up in a field of wheat. In that Parable, the proprietor of the field plainly said, "Some *enemy* has done this (not I)" (Matt 13:28).

Sadly, too often, when a person is faced with severe trials and sufferings, he/she is tempted to blame God: "Why is *God* doing this to me," or "Why does a loving God not come immediately to my aid?" In this process of blaming an outside source, we

conveniently forget the teaching of the Bible that there is a mysterious *evil* Force also at work in our world, whose purpose is "only to steal and kill and destroy" (Jn.10:10). Jesus called this evil power the Devil, and described it as "a murderer from the beginning... a liar, and the father of lies" (Jn.8:44).

We must pray and ask for THE FAITH TO BELIEVE that God is not a moody, tyrannical or uncaring deity who causes cancers and marital breakdowns and tsunamis to plague his beloved children! BUT THE CAUSE LIES IN THE MYSTERIOUS FACT OF A SPIRITUAL BATTLE RAGING BETWEEN THE FORCES OF GOOD AND THE FORCES OF EVIL AND INVOLVING EVERY HUMAN BEING! The precious gift of free will, given to us by the Creator, allows humanity and each of us "to choose life or, to choose death" (Deut 30:15-20), to stay happily on the side of Good, or sadly, to cross over to the Enemy's side.

It is not only a matter of individual sin, but there is also *systemic sin*, well-organised oppressive systems and institutions in the world which perpetuate social injustice and religious persecution. The Bible tells us that Jesus has won the victory over all the Forces of Evil, and that in the "new heaven and new earth" (Apoc, chs.21, 22), whatever has turned creation away from its original purpose will be destroyed, for the sake of the new creation which will fulfil the Lord's prayer: 'Thy Kingdom Come.'

Throughout history, a constant pressure has indeed been exerted on humanity to suspect God! And because of this, St. John Paul II explains, "there is in



the depths of God an unimaginable and inexpressible pain. This inscrutable and indescribable fatherly 'pain' will bring about, above all, the wonderful economy of redemptive love in Jesus Christ, so that love can reveal itself in human history as stronger than sin" (DeV, n.39).

Sadly, in the secular world, the "perverse genius of suspicion" has become so ingrained in human customs and traditions that a good God gets represented as a *moody, tyrannical deity!* Instead of recognizing *man's* refusal to be an obedient *steward* of God's creation (see Gen.1:28) as the cause for the misery and suffering that plagues our world, the secular (and often even the religious) world prefers to make *God* the scapegoat for everything amiss!

However, we cannot blame God for our human ills resulting from global warming, terrorism, wars, poverty, unforgiveness, contagious diseases, etc. On the contrary, from the mystery of his own Son's terrible crucifixion and resurrection, we must conclude that God always desires our good, and that "*wherever evil abounds, his grace super-abounds*" (Rom 5:20).

Especially in this Third Millennium, humanity needs to be reminded that, despite all its technological progress and scientific achievements, this spiritual battle *is still on*, and *involves every human being!*

Moreover, science itself tells us not to straight-away blame God for our troubles, as millions are wont to do! Superstitions, astrology, magic, evil eye, the slogan "God is angry and must be placated" (to the financial gain of so-called gurus, priests and holy men/women), and similar comments abound from

not only the illiterate but even from those with PhD qualifications! A point that illustrates this is how caste-consciousness and oppressive behavior against the "lower castes" is so active today, inspite of education!

So, with so much activity against God's Kingdom on earth, is Jesus not right in asking about "finding faith" when he comes again in glory? What is your personal answer???

Mine is, what about the billions of good people (Christians and of other Faiths) who are living good lives, loving their neighbour, working with dedication and self-sacrifice in politics and in science, and all sincerely for the Kingdom of Jesus? We will tackle this second, positive aspect, in the next issue.

Rejoice then, God is alive, all the time, working out the salvation won for humanity by Jesus, and for All Saints who shared with Jesus in this life! And don't ever forget, November does end with a celebration of the greatest victory of faith -- the FEAST OF CHRIST, THE UNIVERSAL KING!

Glory be to God the Father, to God the Beloved Son, and to God the Holy Spirit!



Dr. Fr. Fiorello Mascarenhas, SJ recently celebrated his Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee and has his 29th book *WOMAN, BEHOLD YOUR SON!* published. His contact: frfiomas@gmail.com

READER'S FEEDBACK

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

This magazine is available online.

Visit us at www.agnelashram.org

PRAYING FOR THE DEAD

- Ninette D'Souza

Our Church Fathers were apostles of the first apostles, or were first generation Christians. The Catholic Church formulates her teachings from ecumenical Councils, Traditions and Scripture. "All who die in God's grace joy of Heaven" (CCC 1030). "The Church gives the name Purgatory of the damned" (CCC 1031). For certain lesser faults, we must believe, that before the Final Judgement, there is a purifying fire. He, who is Truth says, that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come (Mt 12: 32).

What is this 'age to come'? That there are consequences of sin, is a fact. If we accept that there is only Heaven and Hell, and we know it's not possible to go to Heaven with unforgiven sin, then it follows that we're doomed to Hell. This is a scary scenario.

There is therefore a period of final purification for certain temporal sins. Our mortal sins get washed away, when we make an honest confession. It is important for us to understand, that the purifying fire spoken of, for these less falls, comes from God, and is different from the fire of Hell, which comes from the evil one. Souls in 'The Church Suffering' cannot do anything more, neither good nor bad. These are souls awaiting cleansing, who cannot pray for themselves, because their time of earning merit has ended.

Scripture confirms that the Church is composed of not just saints in the making, but of sinners too. The parable of the weeds (Mt13: 24-30), Jesus comparing the Church to a fishnet (Mt 13: 47- 50) bear witness that separation happens at the end. From the very beginning the Church has been a mixed bag – thief and traitor Judas Iscariot was chosen by Jesus Himself!

In 2 Maccabees 12: 39 - 42 we read of the pious act, of the valiant Judas Maccabeus. When he and his men were burying comrades fallen in battle, they discovered that the slain soldiers had been secretly practicing idolatry, so that their sinful deeds be blotted out.

After praying to the Lord, to completely pardon the sin of their dead battle brothers, Judas then took it upon himself, to make a collection, so that a sacrifice could be offered at Jerusalem, as a means of making amends, because he and his companions believed in the resurrection of the dead.



Why did ancient Jews pray for their dead? For the same reason that they prayed for the living – Fraternal Love, confident that such spiritual works would benefit those who had died. Many inscriptions on ancient Christian tombstones, ask the living to intercede for those buried within. Clearly, from early times, the Church has offered prayers and sacrifices for

the faithful departed. Today we offer the greatest sacrifice for them – The Eucharist.

Some Christians object to praying for the dead. Reason? Those in heaven don't need prayers and for those in Hell, prayers are useless. Most people who go to Heaven, still require purification after they die, and before they're ready to live with God, forever. Since God is holy, to be like Him, we too, must be holy. "Nothing unclean..." the Lamb's book of life (Rev 21: 27). Our prayers can help that process. Besides we don't know who is in hell!

Hence, we ought to pray in hope for the worst sinner. Few people even among devout Christians, are fully cleansed of sin and its effects, when they

die. God does not reject any penitent sinner, even one who has been wicked all his life, yet repents at the last moment.

The good thief who gained the benefit of Paradise, represents those who accept their suffering as salvific, as a means of purification. As a dying man, he recognised in another dying man, the 'Source of Life', accepted Him as the Saviour and Messiah and so was able to suffer martyrdom for His sake. He asked Jesus to save him from his sins unlike the bad thief who wanted to be saved from the Cross (Lk 23: 39 - 43). Souls in Hell are damned, but the others will receive salvation after their purification, and will see 'the beatific vision' as it is called, the unending sight of God's face, that grants perfect Blessedness, and is the full and final union with Him, which we know as 'Heaven'. This Christian hope of Heaven, anchors and transforms our lives, even while we're on earth.

Our contemporaries often dismiss the very idea of Hell as a myth, tied to a belief, in a cruel and vengeful God. They attempt to contrast the doctrine of Hell, with Jesus' teachings, insisting that He spoke only of the Father's love and mercy, Jesus actually spoke more often about Hell, in the gospel accounts, than He did of Heaven. Though Jesus insisted God loves the world, and desires that no one should perish eternally, He also insisted that

we stand in danger of damnation, if we reject God's offer of reconciliation. (Jn 3: 16-18). To deny the possibility of Hell is in fact to deny the reality of human free will.

'Purgatory' is simply the name given to that process of purification, as it continues after death. It is a term not occurring in Scripture, but the reality it refers to, is implied by Scriptural truths. God does not purify us instantly in this life, by waving a magic wand.

Since His work to heal us of the effects of sin, is usually painful now, just as surgery for our bodily health is painful, the Purgatorial process, will likely be painful as well. Yet, just as the surgeon uses the cauterization process to bring healing to our bodies, so too, any pain we might experience in Purgatory, will heal our souls. In the end it is a work of GOD'S MERCY.



Ninette D'Souza is a prolific writer and retired teacher of Math and Science at Canossa High School, Mahim. She is also the author of Lamplighter and Lamplighter 2.0.

AGNEL CO-OPERATORS

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

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| Patrons | : Rs. 5000/- |

Please contact:

Rev. Fr. Superior, Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandstand, Bandra (W), Mumbai-400 050. Tel. : 022 67114000

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Bandra

CRESCENDO 2K25 at Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, an overwhelming success

Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, hosted its annual technical festival CRESCENDO 2K25 from 9th to 12th October 2025, under the theme “*Trinetra: Unlock Your Vision. Redefine Reality.*” The event served as a vibrant platform for innovation, collaboration, and experiential learning — reflecting the institute's mission of nurturing technically competent and socially responsible engineers.

The four-day fest was inaugurated at Samvad Auditorium in the distinguished presence of Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Director; Dr. Surendra Singh Rathod, Principal; Dr. Bhushan Patil, Dean of Student Welfare, Dr. Sujata Deshmukh, Crescendo In-charge and chief guest N. Ramesh, Director, Department of Telecommunication. The ceremony emphasized the importance of vision, creativity, and the transformative power of technology in shaping the future.



Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Director, Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, addressing the gathering at the inaugural ceremony.

More than 15 councils and technical bodies organized diverse events throughout the festival. Flagship events like Synergy Hackathon, Roborift 2.0, and CRCE eSports brought together innovation, teamwork, and technical excellence. Other notable events included MechMania 2.0 (ASME), Watt's Next (IEEE), Simulate Life on Mars (Rocket Team), Formula Unicorn (E-Cell), and Digital Decode (CSI). Each event was meticulously designed to test participants' problem-solving abilities, creativity, and domain expertise.

By unlocking their vision and redefining reality, students of Fr. CRCE not only celebrated engineering excellence but also demonstrated the values of teamwork, perseverance, and continuous learning - hallmarks of true professionals in the making. Crescendo 25 emerged as a resounding success, featuring 16 dynamic events (12 council and 4 flagship events) with an impressive footfall of over 3000 attendees, including 400+ participants from outside institutions, reflecting the passion, precision, and professionalism of our student organizers and faculty coordinators.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Pune

Proud Achievements of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune, at Luminotsav

The talented students of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune, participated in Luminotsav, an inter-school competition organized by St. Arnold's Central School on 29th August 2025. The event featured a wide variety of activities such as Music Fusion, Street Play, Debate, Costume Kingdom, PowerPoint Presentation, Rangoli and many more.

The students displayed their creativity, confidence, and teamwork, competing with enthusiasm and excellence. Their efforts brought laurels to the school in multiple categories such as:

Music Activity – In this group event, the students presented a melodious fusion of Indian and Western music and secured the **first prize**.

Street Play – In a thought-provoking group performance titled “*Loktantra Ki Awaaz*,” the students highlighted the importance of democracy and won the **second prize**. Beyond the win, it was the message that truly triumphed.



The winners of the Street Play competition with Rev. Fr. Alex Luis (second from left).

Costume Kingdom – A creative child Shiv Surve from Std. IV designed a shirt and a pant using a simple jute bag. Along with the costume, the child also delivered a thoughtful speech on the uses and benefits of jute, impressing everyone with his creativity and confidence. This outstanding performance won the **third prize**.

PowerPoint Presentation – Ansh Darekar from Std. VI and Arpan Dhurve from Std. VI prepared an informative presentation on the Future of Artificial Intelligence and secured the **second prize**.

Paint a Poem – Aradhya Kaushik from Std. VII and Ovi Baragade from Std. VIII artistically expressed the feelings in a poem through colours and creativity, achieving the **first prize**.

Floral Rangoli – With vibrant patterns and aesthetic designs, students from Std. V and Std. VI showcased artistic skills and earned the **first prize**.

The participation in Luminotsav gave the students valuable exposure, confidence and the joy of competing at an inter-school level.

THE THRESHOLD OF HEAVEN - PURGATORY

- Norma Kamath

The Church gives the name Purgatory to the final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that all who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified are indeed assured of their eternal salvation, but after death, they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The doctrine of Purgatory was especially formulated at the Council of Florence and Trent based on biblical concepts and the tradition of the Church (ccc 1030, 1031).

St. Catherine of Genoa, a mystic writes that in Purgatory a soul gets to see the mercy and purity of God, and an understanding of its own impurity in its totality, and desires the Beatific Vision of God. The purification of the soul starts on earth, death is just a stop between, and the inner purification continues after death.

St. Faustina in her diary speaks of her guardian angel who asked her to follow her, where she saw souls being purified in the flames of Purgatory. Their prayer was of no avail. Their greatest torment was their longing for God. They called Mother Mary, 'Star of the Sea,' and they felt refreshed with her visit. She wanted to stay but the angels did not allow her. Jesus said to her, "My mercy permits, but my justice does not allow."

St. Bridget heard Jesus speaking to his mother, "You my mother, mother of many, the consolation of all the souls in Purgatory. Just by hearing her name they felt consoled."

St. Lucia of Fatima explains, what purifies us is the fire of Divine Love, which is communicated to the soul, in proportion to which each soul responds. The souls that are fully purified go to Heaven.

At a charismatic retreat, I had a vision of the Breath of God, and I understood through the Holy Spirit that we were being refined like metal. I could see some retreatants in front of me, seated on a mat, raising their hands in torment, moaning and groaning. I thought Purgatory must be like this, a cleansing refining fire. The prophet Malachi describes God as a refining fire purifying his people like gold and silver to present them as offerings in righteousness (Mal 3 :2 - 3). John the Baptist speaks of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Mt 3:11). Biblical scholars feel that 1 Cor 3:12-15 refers to Purgatory, where each man's work will become manifest and the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what work each man has done. St. Paul mentions suffering as a means of spiritual growth (Rom 5:3-4). St. Gertrude says that the joy in Purgatory is greater than any joy on earth, and the suffering is greater than any suffering on earth. Purgatory is not a place, but a state of the heart.

St. Nicholas of Tolentino is the patron saint of the souls in Purgatory.

REPARATION FOR SIN - The doctrine of Purgatory is founded on the concept that as a consequence of sin, we have guilt, and we feel obliged to make reparation. The Bible is full of examples. Judas Maccabees atoned for the sins of the dead soldiers, guilty of idolatry, through prayer and a sin offering sent to Jerusalem (2 Maccabees 12:42-45). The prophet Nathan told King David that he would not die for his sin, but his child would die (2 Sam 12: 12-15). Job offered burnt sacrifices for the sanctification of his sons (Job 1: 5).

The Eucharistic Sacrifice and especially Requiem Masses for the dead and Gregorian masses are the most powerful means of deliverance from sin for those in Purgatory. Prayers, mortification, penance, indulgences, almsgiving, and suffrages, all help in the purification process. Surrender of the deceased is also important for their release.

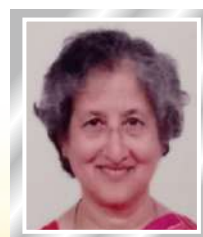
Through the Mystical body of Christ, the baptized on earth are in communion with the saints in heaven, and the souls in Purgatory, and through the prayers of the saints on earth and the saints in heaven, these holy souls are strengthened.

The month of November, especially the 2nd November, All Souls Day, are especially dedicated to prayer for the Holy Souls. Let us remember to pray not only for our loved ones, but the forgotten categories, the souls of converts, prisoners, and those who belong nowhere, who die on the streets. When these souls reach their heavenly home, they pray for their benefactors, who receive many blessings, especially at the hour of death.

Vision of the Restored Temple (Ezekiel 40-48): Depicting a renewed relationship between God and His people, offering a future of peace and presence.

Relevance in the Biblical Narrative

Ezekiel served as a bridge between the messages of judgement (like those of Jeremiah) and future restoration (like in Isaiah). He helped the exiled community reimagine their identity as God's people, even without a land or temple. His vision of a renewed temple and purified worship prefigures Christian understandings of the **Church as God's dwelling** and the **heavenly Jerusalem** (cf. Revelation 21). His influence is also felt in apocalyptic writings, including the Book of Revelation.



Norma Kamath lives in Bangalore. She experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1983 and was called to serve in the intercessory, counselling and healing ministry.

ALL OF US ARE CALLED TO BE SAINTS!

- Sunil D'Cruz

Most of us are named after saints. We go to our local church, named after a patron saint where the Feast Day is celebrated with festivities.

In the early Church, martyrs who had sacrificed their lives were honoured with a Feast Day. Since it became increasingly difficult to have an individual feast day for thousands of martyrs, the Church created a collective feast to honour all martyrs.

In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III (731-741) designated 1st November as the official date for the feast when he dedicated the Chapel of the Madonna of Boccia in St. Peter's Basilica in honour of "all saints."

Pope Gregory IV later extended the celebration to the entire Church in 837 AD, establishing All Saints Day as a universal feast for the Catholic Church.

Initially focused on martyrs, it gradually expanded to include all who had lived holy lives and attained sainthood, whether or not they were canonized.

Saints continue to intercede for those on Earth. We pray to St. Anthony of Padua, the patron saint of lost items, St. Jude Thaddeus, the patron saint of hope in desperate cases and so many others.

Some saints died young such as St. Dominic Savio at 14, St. Maria Goretti at 11 and 15-year-old St. Carlo Acutis, the patron saint of the Internet. He has found an instant connection with the tech-savvy youth of today.

We are inspired by the life of saints. St. Monica prayed for the conversion of her son, St. Augustine. Interestingly, even the birds would listen to St. Francis of Assisi, making him the patron saint of animals and ecology. St. Faustina who had visions of Lord Jesus Christ, inspired the devotion to the Divine Mercy. St. Padre Pio would offer Masses for the souls of the dead who would visit him.

Pope Leo XIV canonized seven blesseds on October

19 in the Vatican, including two Venezuelans, namely, José Gregorio Hernández Cisneros, considered the "doctor of the poor," and María del Carmen Rendiles Martínez, a nun and founder of the Sister Slaves of Jesus.

The others are Ignazio Choukallah Maloyan, an Armenian bishop and martyr killed in 1915 during the Ottoman genocide; Peter To Rot, a lay catechist from Papua New Guinea, martyred during the Japanese occupation in World War II; Vincenza Maria Poloni, founder of the Congregation of the

Sisters of Mercy of Verona; Maria Troncatti, an Italian Salesian missionary; and Bartolo Longo, a former Satanic priest converted to Catholicism and founder of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, Italy.

All of us are called to be saints. Many of our family members who led holy lives, though not canonized, have gained everlasting life in Heaven.

After the funeral of the prayerful Ven. Fr. Agnelo D'Souza of the Society of Pilar, who died on 20th November 1927, aged 58 years, the parish priest of Rachol, Fr. Manuel Albuquerque, said, "I have just laid a saint to rest."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God" (Mathew 5:8). So leading a prayerful, holy life and doing acts of charity to the poor, is the pathway to be counted among the saints in heaven.



Sunil D'Cruz is on the Editorial team of Fr. Agnel Ashram News. He has contributed articles to various local, national and international publications.

CHILDREN ARE THE TRUE WEALTH OF A NATION

- Jubel D'Cruz

Children's Day is celebrated on different dates worldwide, with the most globally recognised date being November 20, which marks World Children's Day and commemorates the UN Declaration and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Other countries like India, celebrate it on their own specific dates, such as **November 14, to honour historical figures like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.**

Children's Day aims to promote children's rights, welfare, and international understanding, with countries choosing dates and methods that best suit their traditions and goals for children.

In India, November 14 is celebrated as Children's Day and on this day, I would like to emphasise the importance of welfare, education and a safe and happy childhood for children globally. November 14 also happens to be the birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister.

Children have a right to education, to enjoy their childhood playing, studying and eating and not working as child labourers. We should therefore abstain from hiring children as labourers of any kind. Parents also should try to be friendly with their children to understand their needs and respond to them in the best way possible. I would also like to say that even children hold the responsibility to learn moral values from their parents, learn sincerely from their schools and to develop communicative, social and other personality skills, by involving in various social, humanitarian and environmental events and campaigns. After all, the children of today are the leaders of tomorrow and the future of our nation is in our hands.

Teaching starts at home and we, as parents must realise that the onus is on us to provide the right environment and instil the right teachings right from the very start.

The day is also known as 'Bal Diwas' because it appreciates and acknowledges children as they are the future of the country.

Since Jawaharlal Nehru, who was adorably referred to as '*Chacha Nehru*' was a great advocate for children's rights, India decided to celebrate his birthday as Children's Day or 'Bal Diwas'.

By celebrating Children's Day as 'Bal Diwas', India reinforced the cultural and emotional significance of the day, making it a uniquely Indian celebration rooted in national pride and values.

Known for his affection towards children, Nehru believed that children are the true wealth of a nation, and his legacy continues to inspire this special day, dedicated to honouring the rights and well-being of children.

However, it also becomes a poignant reminder of the responsibilities we have to ensure that every child in India has the opportunity to thrive.

Children's Day is not just about festivities or giving children an extra dose of attention. The day has deep significance, as it aims to highlight the importance of children in shaping the future of the country. The day is also a moment to reflect on the progress India has made in ensuring these rights are

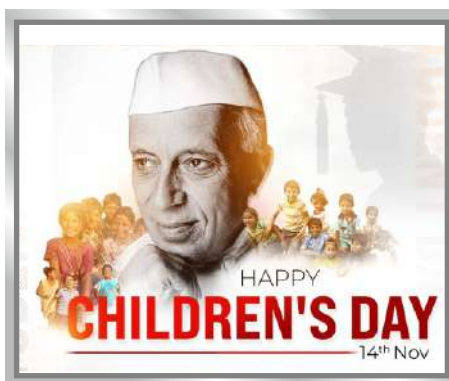
upheld, as well as the challenges that remain.

Jawaharlal Nehru always envisioned a progressive India to focus on children as the future of the nation. He often referred to them as "the most precious resource" of the country. His birthday is therefore celebrated as Children's Day to affirm the commitment of the nation towards the betterment of the lives of its young citizens.

Celebrating Children's Day allows governments and organisations to push for laws and policies that protect children. This can result in new initiatives aimed at enhancing children's lives and well-being.

By highlighting the value of education, Children's Day motivates efforts to ensure that every child has access to quality schooling.

By learning about the history of Children's Day and the reasons behind its celebration, we can truly



understand the role it plays in the growth of our society.

Celebration in schools:

Schools celebrate Children's Day with fun-filled activities like special assemblies, cultural programs, talent shows, art and craft competitions, sports events, and games to create a joyful and memorable experience for students. Teachers often participate in skits, speeches, or even role-swap with students, while classrooms are decorated to foster a festive atmosphere. The day also serves as an opportunity to emphasise child rights, health, and education, and often concludes with sweets or small gifts for the children.

India Post and Children's Day:

India Post also celebrates Children's Day by releasing a special postage stamp every year on 14 November. Stamps issued on this occasion are the only stamps which are not designed by professional stamp designers of India Post. India Post or Bhartiya Dak Vibhag as it is known in Hindi, holds drawing competitions at all India level and the selected best entries gets its place as design of the commemorative postage stamp.

It was in the year 1957 when India Post issued a set of three stamps for the first time on 14th November. First of the stamp was depicting a boy eating a banana. The price of the stamp was 8 paise. The stamp was created from a candid photograph of an eight year boy Shekhar Borker. The photograph was selected from 10,000 entries that were received.

Until 1966, the Children's Day stamps were created using photographs. From 1971 onwards, instead of using photographs, India Post started to use designs of drawings and paintings done by children.

In the year of 1965, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1979, 1988, 1989 and 2003 stamps were not issued on the occasion of Children's Day. However, in 1988 and 1989, stamps were issued on Jawaharlal Nehru on 14th November to mark his birth centenary.

The theme for World Children's Day this year is "Investing in our children is investing in our future," emphasizing the importance of prioritizing children's needs for a better future.

To celebrate Children's Day and honour Nehru's legacy, here is a quiz to test your knowledge.

1. What is the significance of Children's Day?
2. When is Children's Day celebrated in India?
3. When was Jawaharlal Nehru born?

4. Which independence group did Jawaharlal Nehru join in 1918 when he became friends with Mahatma Gandhi?

5. In which district of Uttar Pradesh did Jawaharlal Nehru organise the first Kisan March?

6. On which date was Children's Day celebrated in India before 1964?

7. What is Jawaharlal Nehru's popular nickname in the context of Children's Day?

8. Children's Day is also known as what?

9. Which newspaper was founded by Jawaharlal Nehru?

10. In which year did Jawaharlal Nehru first meet Mahatma Gandhi?

11. Jawaharlal Nehru was officially sworn in as India's first Prime Minister by?

12. When did Jawaharlal Nehru pass away?

13. When was Children's Day in India shifted to November 14?

14. Which country was the first to celebrate Children's Day?

15. Who declared a Universal Children's Day in 1954?

16. What was Nehru's vision for children?

17. Where was Jawaharlal Nehru born?

18. Which organisation promotes children's rights and welfare worldwide?

19. Which historical monument did Jawaharlal Nehru famously address on Independence Day in 1947?

20. Children's Day in India also celebrates the importance of which right?

Answers: 1. To raise awareness about children's rights and welfare, 2. November 14, 3. November 14, 1889, 4. University of London, 5. Pratapgarh, 6. November 20, 7. Chacha, 8. Bal Diwas, 9. National Herald, 10. 1916, 11. Lord Mountbatten, 12. May 27, 1964, 13. 1964, 14. Turkey, 15. United Nations General Assembly, 16. Leaders of the future, 17. Allahabad, 18. UNICEF, 19. Red Fort, 20. Children's education.



Jubel D'Cruz is a freelance writer and the author of several books for children. He also writes letters to the editor for newspapers and magazines all across India on various social, national and environmental issues. He lives in Dombivili, Mumbai.

EZEKIEL: PROPHET OF VISIONS, HOPE AND RESTORATION

- Fr. Trevor D'Souza, OFM (Franciscan)

The name *Ezekiel* brings to mind some of the most vivid and mysterious images in the Bible - wheels within wheels, dry bones coming back to life, and a temple filled with divine glory. His name in Hebrew means “*God strengthens*” or “*may God strengthen,*” and indeed, his life and mission reflect a deep inner strength rooted in faith. Ezekiel was chosen by God to proclaim His word during one of the darkest times in Israel's history - the Babylonian exile. Yet, through his prophetic voice, God offered both judgement and the promise of renewal. His story continues to inspire us today to live with courage, hope, and fidelity.

Who Was Ezekiel?

Ezekiel was both a **priest and a prophet**, the son of Buzi (Ezekiel 1:3). He lived during the 6th century BC and was exiled to Babylon in 597 BC, along with King Jehoiachin and other leaders of Judah (2 Kings 24:10–16). He resided among the Jewish exiles by the Chebar River, far from Jerusalem, yet called by God to serve His people with bold messages and prophetic visions. His priestly background gave him a deep reverence for the Temple and the holiness of God.

The Mission Entrusted to Ezekiel

Ezekiel was called to be a “**watchman for the house of Israel**” (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7), a spiritual sentinel warning the people of danger and guiding them to repentance. His mission included:

- Announcing judgement on Jerusalem and Judah for their disobedience.
- Calling the people to personal responsibility and repentance.
- Revealing God's glory and holiness through symbolic actions and visions.
- Offering hope and restoration after judgement.

In a powerful moment, God gave him a **scroll to eat**, symbolizing the message he was to internalize and proclaim: “*I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth*” (Ezekiel 3:3). His ministry lasted about 22 years (593–571 BC).

Historical Context

Ezekiel lived through the traumatic final years of Judah. The Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, had begun their siege, eventually destroying Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BC. For the Jewish people, this exile was not just political defeat - it was a spiritual crisis. Ezekiel helped them understand that their suffering was due to their

covenant unfaithfulness. Yet, God had not abandoned them.

His Prophetic Contribution

Ezekiel's message stands out for its unique style and substance:

- **Symbolic acts:** lying on one side for 390 days (Ezekiel 4), cutting and scattering his hair (Ezekiel 5), and packing his bags for exile (Ezekiel 12).
- **Visions:** The **chariot-throne of God** (Ezekiel 1), the **valley of dry bones** (Ezekiel 37), and the **new temple and land** (Ezekiel 40–48).
- **Moral responsibility:** He stressed that each person is accountable to God (Ezekiel 18).
- **Holiness of God:** Constantly referred to God as “*the Lord GOD*” (*Adonai Yahweh*).

His powerful, imaginative language deeply impacted later biblical writers and Christian theology.

Key Moments in His Life

- **Call Vision (Ezekiel 1–3):** His encounter with God's glory, featuring four living creatures and wheels of fire, deeply marks the tone of his ministry.
- **Death of His Wife (Ezekiel 24:15–27):** He was told not to mourn, symbolizing the sudden and shocking fall of Jerusalem.
- **Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37):** A striking vision of Israel's spiritual revival and national restoration.
- **Vision of the Restored Temple (Ezekiel 40–48):** Depicting a renewed relationship between God and His people, offering a future of peace and presence.

Relevance in the Biblical Narrative

Ezekiel served as a bridge between the messages of judgement (like those of Jeremiah) and future restoration (like in Isaiah). He helped the exiled community reimagine their identity as God's people, even without a land or temple. His vision of a renewed temple and purified worship prefigures Christian understandings of the **Church as God's dwelling** and the **heavenly Jerusalem** (cf. Revelation 21). His influence is also felt in apocalyptic writings, including the Book of Revelation.

Conclusion

Ezekiel's life shows us that **even in the darkest exile, God remains present and powerful**. He challenges us to take responsibility for our actions, to trust in God's justice, and to never give up hope. His bold visions and faithful witness remind the Church today to proclaim God's word with courage, to remain holy in an unholy world, and to look forward to the restoration God promises. May we too be strengthened - like Ezekiel - to become watchmen and women of hope, truth, and restoration in our time.

Resources: *Dictionary of the Bible; Reader's Digest, Who's Who in the Bible; Internet sources and AI Tools.*

Bible Quiz on the Book of Ezekiel

1. What does the name "Ezekiel" mean?

(Refer: Ezekiel 1:3)

- A) God is with us
- B) God heals
- C) God will judge
- D) God strengthens

2. Ezekiel was by profession a:

(Refer: Ezekiel 1:3)

- A) Fisherman
- B) Priest
- C) Scribe
- D) King

3. Where did Ezekiel receive his first vision?

(Refer: Ezekiel 1:1)

- A) Jerusalem
- B) Mount Sinai
- C) The Chebar River in Babylon
- D) The Jordan River

4. What unusual act did God ask Ezekiel to do to symbolise the siege of Jerusalem?

(Refer: Ezekiel 4:1-8)

- A) Fast for 40 days
- B) Walk barefoot through the city
- C) Lie on his side for many days
- D) Tear his robe in public

5. What did God give Ezekiel to eat as a sign of his prophetic mission?

(Refer: Ezekiel 3:1-3)

- A) Bitter herbs
- B) A scroll
- C) Manna
- D) Coals

6. What did the scroll taste like in Ezekiel's mouth?

(Refer: Ezekiel 3:3)

- A) Bitter
- B) Sour
- C) Like bread
- D) Sweet like honey

7. Ezekiel was called by God to be a:

(Refer: Ezekiel 3:17)

- A) Prophet to kings
- B) Shepherd of sheep
- C) Watchman for Israel
- D) Messenger of peace

8. What happened to Ezekiel's wife?

(Refer: Ezekiel 24:15-18)

- A) She was healed by God
- B) She was taken into exile
- C) She died suddenly
- D) She became a prophetess

9. What did the valley of dry bones represent?

(Refer: Ezekiel 37:11-14)

- A) God's anger
- B) The destruction of Jerusalem
- C) Israel's spiritual death and hope of restoration
- D) The last judgement

10. What is the main theme of Ezekiel chapters 40-48?

- A) The Ten Commandments
- B) The destruction of Babylon
- C) The restoration of Israel and a new temple
- D) The Exodus from Egypt

11. Ezekiel prophesied before the Babylonian exile.

(Refer: Ezekiel 1:2)

True / False

12. Ezekiel used symbolic actions to communicate God's messages.

(Refer: Ezekiel 4-5)

True / False

13. God told Ezekiel to mourn publicly after his wife's death.

(Refer: Ezekiel 24:16-17)

True / False

14. In Ezekiel 18, the prophet teaches that each person is responsible for his or her own sin.

(Refer: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 20)

True / False

15. Ezekiel never received any visions during his prophetic ministry.

(Refer: Ezekiel 1:1; Ezekiel 8:3)

True / False

Answer Key

1-D, 2-B, 3-C, 4-C, 5-B, 6-D, 7-C, 8-C, 9-C, 10-C, 11-False, 12-True, 13-False, 14-True, 15-False



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CALLED TO BE POLITICAL

- Fr. M.K. George, SJ

Most Christians say, “I do not want to be involved in politics.” They fail to realize how naïve such a statement is. No human being can ever be truly non-political.

Often, when someone claims to be neutral or “non-political,” it simply means they are siding - knowingly or not - with the powerful and the exploiters. To be human is to be political. Therefore, for a Christian, the challenge is not whether to engage in politics, but *how* to do so in a distinctly Christian way.

Pope Francis has said it clearly and boldly: “Involvement in politics is an obligation for a Christian. We Christians cannot ‘play the role of Pilate,’ washing our hands of it. We must be involved in politics because politics is one of the highest forms of charity.”

1. Politics as a Vocation of Love and Service

In ordinary conversation, politics is often seen as a game of power or ideology. One joins a political party and becomes either an active worker or a passive supporter. Too often, ideology becomes so rigid that personal freedom is lost - the party rules, and the member becomes just another cog in the machine.

For a Christian, however, politics is a *moral and spiritual calling*. Pope Francis described politics as “one of the highest forms of charity, because it seeks the common good.” Similarly, Pope Benedict XVI, in *Deus Caritas Est* (No. 28), wrote that “the just ordering of society and the State is a central responsibility of politics.”

Both the popes affirm that political engagement is not optional for Christians. It is part of living out the virtue of charity in public life, guided always by truth and love.

2. The Ethical and Justice Dimension: Seeking the Common Good

Catholic Social Teaching consistently emphasizes the *common good*, which refers to “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily” (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 26).

Christian political engagement, therefore, aims to promote justice and peace, defend human rights and dignity, and advocate for the poor and marginalized. Pope John Paul II reminded lay Christians of their mission to “infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of their communities.”

3. Politics Should Serve the Common Good—Not Self-Interest or Ideology

In his 2022 message to the Chemin Neuf Politics Fraternity, Pope Francis said that politics is not merely about ideologies or opposing sides, but about *encounter, reflection, and action* for the sake of the common good. He emphasized that “realities are more important than ideologies,” urging Christians to engage real situations - caring for migrants, protecting the environment, listening to the marginalized - rather than remaining trapped in abstractions.

For us in India, as for people elsewhere, this is a particularly difficult challenge. Divided as we are by religion, party loyalties and ideologies - even within families - how can we live out Pope Francis’s vision of politics as service and dialogue?

4. The Social and Communal Dimension of Politics

Politics is fundamentally about relationships and community. When Christians participate in public life, they are called not only to vote but also to engage in community organizing, advocacy, and dialogue.

Pope Francis had often said that Catholics cannot be content with a faith that is merely private or marginal. He urged believers to have the courage to bring proposals for justice and peace into the public square. On the 52nd World Day of Peace (January 1, 2019), he declared that “good politics is at the service of peace.” Politics, he said, must be exercised with charity, virtue, concern for the vulnerable, and respect for both law and the common good.

5. The Practical and Institutional Dimension: Active Participation in Public Life

Finally, what does it mean to live out this Christian political calling? It means participating actively - as voters, policymakers, public servants, and citizens of conscience. Every Christian is called to vote responsibly, to run for office where possible, and to work for reform within institutions of governance.

To be Christian, then, is to be *actively political* - to bring faith, hope, love and justice into the heart of public life.



Fr. M.K. George, formerly Principal of Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, is currently General Counsellor to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in Rome. He can be contacted at gmutholil@gmail.com

We are approaching the end of the year 2025. How time flies!

14th November is Children's Day in India, to celebrate the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister. World Children's Day is celebrated on 20th November. Children are the future of the world and with that positive note, let's begin...

Interesting Fact



Quinine derived from the bark of the cinchona tree, native to South America, was known to be an effective treatment for malaria. As early as the late 16th century, the dried and powdered bark was

shipped to the British Empire to battle malaria and to maintain the British presence in the colonies. The unpalatable taste of the bitter alkaloid was a common complaint and as a remedy, the colonists began mixing the substance quinine with water and sugar. This crude tonic water took the colonies by storm. Officers began to add this more pleasant dose of malaria prevention to their favourite afternoon tippie. Gin, a favourite among the military elite, was the natural choice. Thus the gin and tonic was born.

Quiz

All about Cats



1. The name of the oldest cat in the world who lived for 38 years.
 2. The percent cats sleep.
 3. Is a cat carnivorous or herbivorous?
 4. How many bones do cats have?
5. Do cats have night vision?
6. Do cats get cavities?

Smile Please



1. Why don't skeletons fight each other?
Answer. They do not have the guts.
2. Man - I used to be indecisive.

Friend - Oh? So now you are not?

Man - I am not quite sure.

3. The barber gave a haircut to a priest. But when the priest tried to pay him the barber refused, "No, do not pay me, you are doing God's work."

The next morning, the barber found a dozen Bibles at his doorstep.

The next day, a policeman came for a haircut. When he tried to pay the barber, the barber said, "No need for you protect the public."

The next morning, the barber found a dozen doughnuts for him.

The next week, a lawyer came for a haircut. The barber refused payment and said, "No need, you serve the justice system."

The next morning, the barber found a dozen lawyers waiting for a free haircut.

4. A man and his wife were going for a long drive. On the way, they passed a gas station. The wife was surprised that there was a fee to fill the tyres.

"Why on earth do they charge for AIR?"

The husband replied, "Inflation."

Inspirational Quotes

President Trump of America



1. Without passion, you don't have energy and without energy you have nothing.
2. I try to learn from the past but I plan for the future focussing exclusively on the present.
3. Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other.
4. Remember there is no such thing as unrealistic goals just unrealistic time frames.
5. Sometimes by losing the battle, you find a new way to win the war.
6. What separates the winners from the losers is how a person reacts to each new twist of fate.

Naturopathy - The science of nature for healing



1. To get a good night's sleep, avoid watching television close to bedtime. Drink a glass of warm water or milk and this helps you to sleep better.
2. Reetha, an Indian herb, has long been used by Indian women to wash their hair

like a shampoo. Reetha has saponins and this means it can form a lather when used close to how a shampoo commercial shampoo works. Reetha is beneficial for hair since it does not contain chemicals. It can be used with egg as a shampoo.

3. To relieve a headache naturally, try sipping a cup of coffee for the caffeine can help.

4. Ginger can help in reducing migraine episodes. Add a little ginger to your tea or water and sip it regularly.

What's the Good Word?

Water Birds



1. Three water birds.
2. The two important physical characteristics of water birds.
3. A water bird with a built-in snorkel.

4. The water bird that uses its chest like a napkin.

5. Fastest underwater swimming bird.

Brain Teasers



1. I am taken from a mine and shut up in a wooden case. I am never released but used by everybody. I can be both blunt and sharp. What am I?

2. I cannot be bought but I can be stolen with a glance. I am priceless to two but worthless to one. What am I?

3. You change me every month and tear a page, a part of me. What am I?

4. Until I am measured, I am unknown. You glance at me every day but you cannot talk to me. What am I?

5. $Z=24$, $Y=$ half of Z . X is quarter the sum of Y and Z and divided by 3. What is the value of Y and X ?

Inspirational Story



Once upon a time in a desert far away grew a rose plant, on it was a very beautiful almost perfect red rose. Next to her a cactus plant grew. The rose very proud of her beauty was upset having to share the same space with the ugly looking cactus.

She would mock and insult the cactus but the cactus did not retaliate, only kept silent. The other plants growing next to them tried to intervene and tell her not to hurt the poor cactus. But the rose too proud of her beauty that shone like a beacon of light amidst the plain plants did not pay any heed to their advice. During summer however, there was no water and

the desert became dry. The rose began to wilt. Her beautiful petals dried up and lost their lush fresh colour. Looking at the cactus the rose saw a sparrow dip his beak into the cactus and drink some water. Thoroughly ashamed the rose asked the cactus if she could have some water. The cactus kindly agreed, bearing no great resentment against her.

Thus both went through that rough dry summer as friends. The rose ceased to be too proud of her beauty after that although during spring she began to bloom again.

What do we learn?

We are often quick to judge others based on their looks. After all one's appearance is the first thing one sees. But we learn from this story that we must never judge anyone by the way they look. They may possess many hidden facets to their personality that may last more than just looks in the long term. Also criticising others based on their appearance is also very wrong. Nobody can really help the way they look at least where features, skin colour and height and weight is concerned. Therefore instead of being judgemental, let's celebrate everyone's looks as special and reflecting the image of God.

Riddle Me



1. What runs but never walks or sits?

2. What breaks each day but never falls?

3. What bank never has money?

4. What is there one of every corner and two of every room?

5. What disappears as soon as you say its name?

The value of dark chocolate



Dark chocolate is healthier than you would think. It is very nutritious and contains soluble fibre and is loaded with minerals. It is loaded with organic compounds called antioxidants.

These antioxidants help the body to fight the free radicals that may cause oxidative stress and increase the risk of developing diseases.

The flavonoids in dark chocolate can help to lower blood pressure. However more research has to be done on this subject. Consuming dark chocolate can improve cardiovascular health for by eating it 3 times a week it lowers the risk of cardiovascular problems by 9 percent.

It can help improve brain function.

So what are you waiting for? If you have a sweet tooth never feel guilty about consuming a few pieces (in moderation) of dark chocolate every day. There are in the market sugar free dark chocolate bars available too. It is actually good for you.

World News



It is said that the damage to Gaza is so extensive that it would take 70 billion dollars to restore it.

AI is revolutionising medical diagnosis.

Gene therapy is curing

incurable diseases.

A 14-year-old teenager was arrested by authorities for dancing the Macarena in a busy Saudi Arabian street. Some have labelled his behaviour as immoral.

Fit for Life

All about Dancing



Most people equate exercise with walking, jogging, running or going to the gym.

However, these last few years has witnessed a surge in the importance of dancing as a good exercise.

There are many benefits to dancing. It can lead to improved heart health, muscular strength, balance, flexibility, co-ordination and helps improve one's mind.

The type and intensity of dance determines the calories burnt.

Gentle ballroom kind of dancing will burn less calories per hour as compared to do the salsa or hip hop. Just 30 minutes of dancing can burn up to 250 calories and for a more intense workout try salsa or hip hop. Worried about a protruding belly? Dancing can reduce belly fat especially when combined with a balanced low calorie diet. 30 minutes of vigorous dancing can burn more calories in the same time as running, swimming or cycling.

So since dancing is enjoyable, you can try to dance at least once or twice a week for thirty minutes with music you like and the effects will please you not just physically but improve your mood as well.

Dancing classes are popular these days and if you do not want to dance by yourself. it might be fun to dance with a group and a kind of recreational exercise.

Wisdom Message of the Month

The importance of not insulting another person's city or country



If you have ever gone abroad or visited another city or even had guests from some other place visiting you, there are certain things one has to bear in mind.

Once at a dinner party a guest from abroad had been invited. The guest after a while commented, "I know some of my relatives would never visit a country like yours, it's a third world country."

Now this Indian host was shocked at first but laughed it off.

But undoubtedly this rankled and it kind of spoiled the party for a moment. When one is a guest in another person's country always say either nice things or do not say anything at all.

Adverse comments are very hurtful.

Comments like, "Your roads have potholes, your country is dirty and your country is not advanced enough." Such people are only displaying ignorance for they fail to see the beauty and value of another country. These views are bigoted and prejudiced.

Or, "Your country is filled with divorced people, lazy people and your countrymen have a lack of morals," is very unflattering and can make a bad impression. This impression is of a person with no manners and no real understanding of seeing the good in someone's country.

Let's be complimentary and kind. It always makes the other person feel happy. After all spreading a bit of cheer just improves everyone's mood not leave a sour taste.

What do we learn?

Avoid being critical of another person's city or country on their face unless they are hostile towards your country or city, even so try not be insulting. After all if you are the finer person, then you must rise above these petty things. Every city or country has good and bad, positive and negative. No place on earth is Utopia. Even people settled abroad face so many problems of racism and lack of proper good jobs. There exists both positive and negative points in every country no matter how great it might be. So let's exercise good manners and never be openly uncomplimentary toward another person's city or country.

Answers

Quiz

1. Crème Puff.
2. 70 percent.
3. Carnivorous.
4. 250 bones.
5. Yes excellent night vision.
6. No.

What's the Good Word?

1. Ducks, swans and geese.
2. Webbed feet and specialised gills for feeding.
3. Ibises.
4. The great Blue heron.
5. The Gentoo penguin.

Brain Teasers

1. Pencil lead.
2. Love.
3. Calendar.
4. Time. $Y=12$ and $X=3$

Riddle Me

1. River.
2. Daybreak.
3. Riverbank.
4. The letter o.
5. Silence.



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



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VASAI: As a staunch devotee of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I always seek his intercession. My prayers have been answered which has increased my faith.

-Maline D'Mello

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

USA: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for his intercession and caring for me abroad. During my recent visit to India, I visited Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandstand Bandra, Mumbai and offered prayers.

- Keagan Pinto

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

AUSTRALIA: Even though I am Down Under in the continent of Australia, I have staunch faith in the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. I also pray that the Venerable will be canonised a saint.

- Kimberley Pinto

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

MANGALORE: Ven. Fr. Agnel always intercedes for his devotees. Many favours are granted through his powerful intercessions.

-Naveen Gomes

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VASAI: My prayers have been answered through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. I find that the mud from his grave, available at Fr. Agnel Ashram, has healing power. Many of my aches and pains have vanished when applying the holy mud.

- Deepali Sagar Rebello

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD JOB

MUMBAI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing me with a good job. It makes me feel happy and secure.

- Thomas Ramya

THANKSGIVING FOR GIFT OF GRANDSON

MULUND: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have been blessed with a grandson. Everything is possible with faith and prayer.

-Rajnikanth Muntod

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VIRAR: I would like to give thanks to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession and for all the blessings received.

-Blessina Lopes

THANKSGIVING FOR FINDING STOLEN BIKE

MUMBAI: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession in helping me find my bike that was stolen. Praise the Lord!

-Jennifer Agnelo Dacosta

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

ANDHERI, MUMBAI: I have deep faith in the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. I find immense peace and joy, whenever I visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandstand - Bandra, Mumbai and can feel a divine power there.

- Rishikant Shetty

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH

MUMBAI: I am keeping good health through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. Whenever possible, I attend the Novena in Gujarati on Sundays at 3 p.m.

-Anandiben Ramanbhai Solanki

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD JOB IN SUDAN

MUMBAI: On behalf of Udayakumar Nadarajan, I would like to offer thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession in helping him get a good job in Sudan.

- Xavier

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

MUMBAI: As staunch devotees of Ven. Fr. Agnel, we would like to thank him for his intercessions and answering our prayers.

- Pauline & Irene

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------|---------------------------|------------|------|---------------------------|-------------|------|
| Ittoop Lonan | Kerala | 50000 | Norbert F. Cerejo | Palghar | 2000 | Ankit G. Patel | Mumbai | 1000 |
| Praveen Srivastava | Mumbai | 71000 | Aarav D'Silva | Mumbai | 2000 | Ghanshyan K. Patel | Mumbai | 1000 |
| Supreet Charitable Trust | Mumbai | 30000 | Sonali D'Souza | Mumbai | 2000 | Sangita G. Patel | Mumbai | 1000 |
| Sagaya Anita Nadar | Mumbai | 24000 | Ryan D'Souza | Mumbai | 2000 | Jinal Patel | Mumbai | 1000 |
| Naresh Gangaramani | Khar | 21000 | Rayna D'Souza | Mumbai | 2000 | Kimaya Subramaniam | Mumbai | 1000 |
| Naik Namrata Madhukar | Mumbai | 15000 | Rahul Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Raj C. Pachickara / Neena | Kerala | 800 |
| Francis Ignatius Corda | USA | 11000 | Sasha Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Lakshmi Chandran | Kerala | 700 |
| Falguni Solanki | Palghar | 8000 | Valentine Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Aryam Ishwar Attara | Mumbai | 700 |
| Subramaniam R. | Mumbai | 5250 | Melvyn Rebeiro | Mumbai | 2000 | Reinson J. D'Souza | Palghar | 700 |
| Kersi Kapadia | Bengaluru | 5000 | Malcolm Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Marian Fabian D'Souza | Mumbai | 605 |
| Unnikrishnan Nair C. | Mumbai | 5000 | Sandra Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Canute D'Souza | Tamil Nadu | 600 |
| Dina Kaikobad Irani | Parel | 5000 | Veronika Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Kiran Solanki | Mumbai | 501 |
| Noshir Cawasji Gotla | Mumbai | 5000 | Yudh Vijay Nautiyal | Mumbai | 2000 | Satish H.Sonawle | Mumbai | 501 |
| Suraj Pai | Singapore | 5000 | Christopher Rocky D'Mello | Palghar | 2000 | Bhaven & Shanaya Dumasia | Mumbai | 501 |
| Rajani Michael Shelke | Pune | 5000 | A. R. Elavia | Mumbai | 2000 | Mathew Kurian | Bangalore | 501 |
| Ganita Rajrohan Sartape | Mumbai | 5000 | Darab Bajina Foundation | Mumbai | 1500 | Neela Macwan | Gujarat | 500 |
| Reuben D'Souza | Mumbai | 5000 | Gavin Peter Fonseca | Mumbai | 1500 | Caline Samre | Palghar | 500 |
| Bosco Pereira | Mumbai | 5000 | Arun Jadhav | Kolhapur | 1500 | Valentina Valece Bajli | Palghar | 500 |
| Brian Dlima | Mumbai | 4000 | Fransquinha Fernandes | Mumbai | 1250 | Niranjan M Amolik | Maharashtra | 500 |
| Techno Products | Chennai | 3000 | Melvyn J. D'Mello | Thane | 1250 | Amrith Raj | Tamil Nadu | 500 |
| Jessie Alex | Mumbai | 3000 | Monica D'Souza | Pune | 1200 | Jensa Agnel | Mumbai | 500 |
| Jennifer Patrick | Mumbai | 3000 | Rita Johnson | Kerala | 1200 | Priya Sebastian | Kerala | 500 |
| Jessie Alex | Mumbai | 3000 | Marian Fabian D'Souza | Mumbai | 1115 | Machado & Sons | Tamil Nadu | 500 |
| Jennifer Patrick | Mumbai | 3000 | S.N. Irani | Mumbai | 1110 | Miransh Dosh | Mumbai | 500 |
| Ralston Francis Pereira | Palghar | 2500 | Umesh D. Kanani | Mumbai | 1001 | Kyraka Maraka | Mumbai | 500 |
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| Vijo John | Palghar | 2000 | Jacob D'Souza | Mumbai | 1000 | Frankey F. Gonsalves | Palghar | 500 |
| Benny Pereira | Kurla | 2000 | Albert Thomas | Mumbai | 1000 | Warden Kangoele | Palghar | 500 |
| Lynette Lillian D'Cruz | Mumbai | 2000 | Paresh M. Thakkar | Thane | 1000 | Jasmine Mehernoz Kavina | Gujarat | 500 |
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| Awreelia M D'Silva | Palghar | 2000 | Preet P. Thakkar | Thane | 1000 | Agnella Abraham | Mumbai | 500 |
| Saji Mon Abraham | Kerala | 2000 | Mohes Boat | Palghar | 1000 | Deepak Shah | Thane | 500 |
| Anthony I Nadar | Thane | 2000 | Joyal Pereira | Palghar | 1000 | R. Victor | Tamil Nadu | 500 |
| Jagruiti Doshi | Mumbai | 2000 | Glen Agnel Dabre | Palghar | 1000 | P. D'Silva | Mumbai | 500 |
| Praveen Raja | Chennai | 2000 | Mary Antony | Kerala | 1000 | Melvin Joseph | Mysore | 500 |
| Jose T.K. | Kerala | 2000 | A.Santhappan | Tamil Nadu | 1000 | Rose D'Silva | Mumbai | 500 |
| Annie Joseph | Kerala | 2000 | Valani & Elsie D'Souza | Mumbai | 1000 | Crism Boat | Palghar | 500 |
| Princeton | Mumbai | 2000 | Philip Monteiro | Bangalore | 1000 | P. D'Silva | Mumbai | 500 |
| Sonali D'Souza | Mumbai | 2000 | Varsha Rajendra Shukla | Mumbai | 1000 | Melvin Joseph | Mysore | 500 |
| Ryan D'Souza | Mumbai | 2000 | Henden Pandrick | Palghar | 1000 | Veena Lobo | Mangalore | 500 |
| Rayna D'Souza | Mumbai | 2000 | Agnelo D'Sa | Palghar | 1000 | Wilson Gomes | Mangalore | 500 |
| Rahul Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Cami Doshi | Mumbai | 1000 | Sunil Joseph D'Silva | Palghar | 500 |
| Sasha Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Nergish P. Daston | Mumbai | 1000 | Anto Paul | Kerala | 500 |
| Valentine Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Nikhil Pinto | Mumbai | 1000 | Kochala K. | Kerala | 500 |
| Melvyn Rebeiro | Mumbai | 2000 | Hiren Gala | Mumbai | 1000 | Pratima S. Patwardhan | Pune | 400 |
| Malcolm Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Rockhenry A. Chettiari | Thane | 1000 | Karina Fernandez | Kerala | 350 |
| Sandra Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Benny Pereira | Mumbai | 1000 | M. Rajathi | Tamil Nadu | 300 |
| Veronika Rodrigues | Mumbai | 2000 | Aruna Fernando | Tamil Nadu | 1000 | Jacinto Miranda | Goa | 300 |
| Attely Anto Kuttikadan | Thane | 2000 | Pamela D'Costa | Mumbai | 1000 | Maria Sussai Nathan | Tamil Nadu | 300 |
| Jagruiti Doshi | Mumbai | 2000 | Fittech Industries | Mumbai | 1000 | C.K. Fernandes | Gujarat | 250 |

BOB'S BANTER

by Robert Clements

I Am Worthy..!

A few years ago, a close friend of mine fell deep into alcoholism. It was heartbreaking to watch a bright, capable young man crumble into dependence on drink. One night, he took his car and, completely drunk, drove all the way to Lonavala. I kept calling him again and again, pleading with him to stop, to turn back, to pull over somewhere safe.

He didn't answer most of my calls. When he finally picked up, his voice was slurred and angry. I thought he was too far gone to hear reason.

Months later, after he managed to quit drinking, he met me over coffee and said something I'll never forget. "Bob," he said, "you remember that night you kept calling me when I was driving drunk? You thought I couldn't hear you, but I did. And through all that haze, one thought wouldn't leave my mind, 'Am I so worthy that Bob keeps calling me?' Because that was the time I felt the most unworthy. I

My friend didn't come back to sobriety because someone preached to him about sin. He came back for many reasons, but one of them being that someone believed he was still worthy. That belief lit a spark inside him when he had no light left of his own.

There are people around us right now who are quietly fighting their own demons - addiction, depression, failure, shame. You may not know it, but your patience, your phone call, your refusal to give up on them might just be the thing that saves them.

When we look at someone at their worst and still treat them as worthy of love, we echo what God does with us every single day. He never stops calling. Even when we drive full speed in the wrong direction, He keeps dialling, whispering, "You are still mine."

So the next time someone disappoints you, don't




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couldn't stop drinking. I had disappointed everyone, including myself. But your calls told me something else, that someone still thought I was worth saving."

I was silent for a long moment. His words hit me harder than anything I'd heard in years. We often think that lecturing people, scolding them, or giving them a long sermon will bring them back. But sometimes, it's simply the act of not giving up that becomes the sermon.

We live in a world where people are discarded easily: Fail once, and you're written off. Struggle with a weakness, and you're labelled hopeless. Lose your way, and suddenly everyone pretends they never knew you. We call it being practical. But all it really shows is that we've forgotten how grace works.

walk away too quickly. Don't decide they're beyond help. Remember that your persistence might one day make them sit back and say, "Am I really that worthy?"

And maybe that question, asked through tears and awakening, is the very start of their journey back home...!

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

*Fr. Agnel Ashram Community
and Balbhavan Children
wish all our friends and benefactors*

A Happy Feast of Christ the King!



*Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe
Sunday, November 23, 2025*

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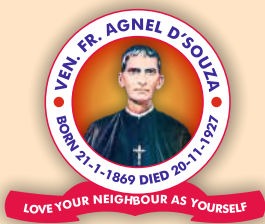
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Wishing the young ones a brighter future ahead!



*Happy
Children's Day*

God Bless You All!



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