



FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

September 2025



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MAMA MARY!

CONTENTS

Message from the Regional Superior	3
Editorial	4
Hope Arises Eternal ...	6
The Queenship of Mary	8
Joy of Giving	9
Vailankanni: Lourdes of the East	10
Agnel Happenings	12
Celebrating the Architects of Tomorrow: A Tribute to Teachers	19
Called to Inter-Religious Dialogue	20
Just for Fun	21
Fr. Agnel's Blessings	24
Out of Their Bounty	25
Bob's Banter	26

Printed & Published by
Fr. Valerian D'Souza, sfx on behalf of Agnel Publications

Editor
Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho, sfx

Printed at :
S.B.M. Printers
C-130, Ansa Industrial Estate,
Andheri (East),
Mumbai - 400 072.

Place of Publication :
Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandstand,
Bandra, Mumbai - 400 050.
Single Copy Price : Rs. 15
Annual Subscription : Rs. 150
agnelashramnews@gmail.com
[website : www.agnelashram.org](http://www.agnelashram.org)



FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

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

Email : fragnelashrambandra@gmail.com | Website : www.agnelashram.org

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

THE NATIVITY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - BANDRA FEAST - 2025



Dear Friends and Well-Wishers,

It is with great joy that we celebrate the birth of Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, on 8th September, of whom was born our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Mother intercedes for us and fills our lives with hope.

It is a time of rejoicing, more so for our little Agnelite angels, the Balbhavan children who organise a Fun Fair at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra. Your financial contribution in assisting us in caring for our children will be very special, on this occasion.

We wish you a Happy Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary and assure you of our daily prayers for your special intentions by our children.

With a grateful heart and best regards,

Yours Sincerely in the Lord,

Fr. Valerian D'Souza, sfx
(Superior)



1. Donations to Society of St. Francis Xavier, Pilar, are exempted from Income Tax.
2. Please issue Cheque/Draft/M.O. in favour of 'Society of St. Francis Xavier, Pilar' or send to the A/c. No. below through NEFT and email us details of donations to fragnelashrambandra@gmail.com
3. It is mandatory to quote your Name, Address and PAN No.
4. Visit our Website for further details: www.agnelashram.org

Account Name	Bank Details	A/c. No.
Society of St. Francis Xavier, Pilar	Union Bank of India Mumbai - Bandra, Branch: Baitul Sharaf, 105, Hill Road, Bandra (W), Mumbai - 400 050	520141000955503

IFSC: UBIN0901202

Please detach the Form below and return it with your generous offering.

MY BANDRA FEAST SPONSORSHIP 2025

To,

Fr. Superior,

Fr. Agnel Ashram, P.B. No. 6656,
Bandstand, Bandra (W), Mumbai – 400 050.

Dear Fr. Superior,

I am sending my Cheque/Draft/M.O. for _____ as my contribution for the children under your care.

Name & Address: _____

Pin _____ Phone _____ PAN No. _____

Email I.D. _____ Our Ref. No. _____

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL SUPERIOR



On 5th September, we celebrate Teacher's Day and honour teachers for their dedication and commitment in shaping the careers of students. A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind, and touches a heart. The mentor inspires hope, ignites imagination, and instils love for learning. Teachers plant the seeds of knowledge that last a lifetime. Great teachers inspire, challenge, and empower. **Happy Teacher's Day to all teachers.**

Sharing is caring. On International Day of Charity, observed on the 5th of September, it is time to give generously for the cause of the marginalised. A helping hand goes a long way into bringing a ray of sunshine into many lives.

The festival season is here. Let us celebrate Eid-e-Milad, Onam, Navratri, Durga Puja and more. During Dussehra, effigies of the demon king Ravana are burnt, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. The burning is a powerful visual representation of overcoming negative forces, ego, and inner demons, reminding people to strive for righteousness, kindness, and honesty.

We observe International Literacy Day on 8th September every year. 'Each one teach one' is a motto we can adopt, even by sponsoring a child's education.

Engineer's Day is celebrated in India on 15th September every year, as a tribute to the Indian Engineer Bharat Ratna Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya. We wish good luck to all aspiring engineers to construct engineering marvels and improve the quality of daily life.

Living in peace and harmony is something close to my heart. So the International Day of Peace, propagating non-violence and ceasefire observed on 21 September around the world, holds special significance for me.

World Heart Day is observed annually on 29th September. It is time to go for routine check-ups, monitor your cholesterol levels, go for walks or do exercise and take care of your health. Live healthy, stay healthy!

-Fr. Bento Rodrigues
Regional Superior

MARY - GOD'S FAVOURED ONE

- Ninette D'Souza

SOME TITLES OF MARY TO REFLECT ON - A LITANY FOR OUR TIMES SO TO SAY.

Mary, contemplative in action.

Mary, glory of the Father.

Mary, Mother of sorrows.

Mary, Divine Providence.

Mary, most affectionate.

Mary, of the unborn.

Mary, a revolutionary.

Mary, an empowered woman.

Mary, Mother of consolation.

Mary, fountain of light and hope.

Mary, Mother and Mediatrix of grace.

Mary, Temple of the Saviour.

Mary, most mature.

Mary, Mother of God.

Mary, Mother of reconciliation.

Mary, most daring and courageous.

Mary, always pondering.

Mary, responsible and accountable.

Mary, a visionary.

Mary, the ministering angel.

Mary, Mother of unity in diversity.

Mary, handmaid of the Lord.

Mary, pillar of faith.

Mary, Queen of all creation.

A quiet reflective meditation on the life of our Blessed Mother, will lead to the realization of how deeply rooted in the faith she was. A youthful girl who accepted God's plan without worrying about what people would have to say. Young as she was and open to God's message, she still had the courage to raise a question before she could make a decision, in faith.

Despite her personal unusual circumstances, Mary was more excited about her cousin Elizabeth's good news. She didn't stay still. She stepped into purpose. She didn't wait for perfect conditions or an opportune moment but moved out in faith and made history. What great joy she brought to Elizabeth as she went in haste to greet her!

When I read the prologue and Chapter 1 of Luke's gospel until Mary's Magnificat, Mary does not come across in any which way as, The Mother of God. She seems more like a homeless nomadic refugee, who in spite of the trying circumstances, continued to remain calm and serene. Her youth notwithstanding, Mary showed great wisdom in difficult moments. This gift comes only through a contemplative and abiding faith in God and in His plans.

Mary believed that God would work His plan for mankind through her Son as He had promised. She

believed in her Son and in God. That faith is what allowed Mary to display exemplary courage and stand firm at the foot of the Cross, eyes filled with sadness; not anger at the injustice of it all, heartbroken, hands empty; but still STANDING.

Mary didn't try to fix anything. She didn't try to explain it away or try to escape it. She just stayed and maybe that's what FAITH really looks like. Simply staying put when everything in us wants to run away from the pain, from the grief. It was Mary's faith that held all the disciples together before they received the gift of the Holy Spirit as promised by, Jesus.

Mary's unshakeable faith was once again on display when she took over the situation at Cana, telling the servants to do whatever her Son asked them to do. With this deeply rooted faith, she was made strong and able to take up any challenge that came her way. Mary teaches us to do as she did.

Stand still and trust God, even when hurting. Mary proves that LOVE doesn't always look loud or triumphant – sometimes it is quiet, cracked, trembling but still faithful. I have come to realize that God doesn't use the still, he uses 'the surrendered.'

From the beginning of Christianity, the Church has



looked at Mary not just as the Mother of Jesus, but as a living masterpiece of God's grace. As the New Eve, Mary brought new life to humankind through her Son, Jesus, the new Adam. As the Ark of The Covenant and the first disciple she said, 'Yes' without holding back. All around us we perceive statues and pictures of Mary, one more beautiful than the other. But Mary was not a cold marble statue. Every page of her life was total openness to the love of God. She placed herself completely in God's hands. She heard His call to devote her whole life to bringing up Jesus. She made His mission, her mission. After she found God's love, she gave without counting the cost.

Mary was never spiritually asleep so she was able to see the glory of God in her life. The four Marian Dogmas that the Catholic Church, guided by the Holy Spirit promulgates, have helped the faithful recognise not just certain truths about her as mere honours but as profound realities that point directly to Jesus. 'To Jesus, through Mary.' That is why Mary matters in our salvation story.

Years ago, I had used sourced simple food items and focussing on some of their important properties, had created a Prayer Service for the Canossian Sisters on the feast of the Institute, September 15, feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. I correlated some of Mary's qualities with those of the provisions as they serve us in our day-to-day run of the mill lives. I share the concept here.

1) **Potato.** This vegetable though a stem is rooted in the earth. It is filled with strength and nourishment for rich and poor, sinner and saint. Our Blessed Mother Mary is like this humble potato, rooted in faith and through her life teaches that we too need to be strong and have deep roots of faith, so that we are able to take up any challenge thrown at us.

2) **Grains of Rice.** For millions of people around the world, Rice is a staple food. Rice feeds the hungry and brings back life to the undernourished. Our Blessed Mother Mary invites us to be like Rice, truly life giving, life restoring, life nurturing persons in our different relationships.

3) **Cooking Oil.** Cooking Oil is fragrant. Just like our Blessed Mother Mary whose very life was poured out like fragrant cooking oil in the service of others, we too need to learn to be lights that glow, leading others to 'The Way', while flowing out to those in need, in love and generosity.

4) **Sugar.** Sugar gives instant energy and a spoonful of it can wipe away the most bitter taste. Just like our Blessed Mother Mary, we

can also with wisdom and courage, stand against injustice meted out to women, understanding that women are not meant to be abused and crushed but loved and respected, in order that their sweetness flows out to those they come in contact with.

5) **Dal.** The simple humble Dal is the mother of all foods for us in India. Though it seems to be the least of all, it is also the greatest. Young and old find it easy to digest. A steaming cup of Dal is welcome at any time of the year. Just as our Blessed Mother Mary enjoyed the simple chores of life, we ought to learn from her to enjoy the simple jobs assigned to us within our families and as we execute them to perfection, succeed in keeping our family relationships healthy and happy.

6) **Tea.** For most people Tea is life giving. Tea wakes us up, lifts our weary spirits and refreshes our bodies. Just as our Blessed Mother Mary always thought of others and went out of her way to help them, we too with our offerings of good deeds should try to wipe away the darkness in society and spread good cheer as Mary did.

7) **Onion.** An Onion is so simple and yet has many layers to it. It is considered so common and undervalued but in the Middle Ages, this vegetable was so important that people paid their rent with Onions and even gave them as gifts. Just as our Blessed Mother Mary kept the disciples together, we too must learn from her to keep our families together like the many layers of the Onion. With her intercession, we pray that we may be able to live where there is no violence and fear, where we respect the dignity of every human being, the unborn, the elderly, children and parents.

Let this Nativity of our Blessed Mother Mary fill us with HOPE so that in true earnestness we may ponder, pray and journey forward in Faith as Pilgrims in this Jubilee Year.



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.

HOPE ARISES ETERNAL...!

- Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

“Hope arises eternal in the human breast” (Alexander Pope). And our dear departed **Pope Francis** wanted the whole Church to *experience* this profound truth even more (and to foster it), because its foundation comes from the Holy Bible. It is a truth of biblical spirituality: *“Hope does not disappoint”* (Romans 5:5), together with the truth that in this world we are always on pilgrimage. Now, halfway through this Holy Year, I thought it might help to revise for all of us the vision and the rationale of the Pope calling literally millions and millions of Catholics (and other Christians) to come on pilgrimage from all parts of the world to Rome, to enter through the Holy Doors and to celebrate the Jubilee of our Redemption by Jesus Christ. (And news reports indicate that about thirty million people have come, or are coming, to Rome on this very pilgrimage!)

Owing perhaps to the inroads being made by modern relativism and secularism, our laity, especially the youth, but also the religious and the clergy, are perennially in need of a renewal course in Christianity. The Gospel must be presented again in a fresh way, with insights and practical applications adapted to life in this fast changing world. The theme PILGRIMS OF HOPE can help all of us to do this, for it provides us with resources to grow *“to the measure of the full stature of Christ”* (Eph 4:13).

“PILGRIMS OF HOPE” is not only a transitory Holy Year *motto* for Christians, but it applies throughout life to *all human beings*, of whatever creed, nation, or state of life! Every human person is a *“pilgrim”* on this earth, as Pope Francis repeatedly reminded the world’s leaders when talking about “our common temporary home” and the urgent need to hand over to our children and grandchildren a rich legacy of ‘caring’ for it. This is not only because of purely secular practical reasons, but because the death and resurrection of a unique historical person called Jesus Christ has made available to all of humanity

the great gift of a real hope of eternal life!

The Second Vatican Council declared: *“All of this applies not to Christians only but to all men and women of goodwill in whose heart’s grace is active invisibly. For since Christ died for all, and all men and women are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery”* (The Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, n 22). In God’s providence, any person of goodwill who did not have the real opportunity to ask for and to receive Christian sacramental baptism can still be saved for eternal life through Jesus’ death and resurrection *“in a way known to God.”*



Pope Saint John Paul II developed this theme in 1990 in his encyclical on missionary work, explaining that the gift of salvation cannot be limited *“to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the*

Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all... (But) many people do not have the opportunity to come to know or to accept the Gospel revelation, or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions” (RM, n 10).

We can conclude joyfully therefore, that Jesus Christ is truly the Universal Saviour and Good Shepherd, who has laid down his life for his sheep, and no Christian or person of other faiths comes to the Father except by him. John Paul II also insisted, *“The unique value of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross must always be acknowledged in the destiny of every man... It is important to stress that the way of salvation taken by those who do not know the Gospel is not a way apart from Christ”* (ibid).

The Kingdom of God is not limited to the Catholic Church!

We stand in awe and wonder at God's Providence and Mercy which "fills the whole earth." The Kingdom of Jesus Christ has no humanly defined boundaries because it is a spiritual reality! Reflect on and ask yourself, 'Would it not be unjust of a loving Father God to lose two thirds or more of human beings (all created in his image) if, for no fault of their own, they just were not able to receive sacramental baptism?' If we look around us and take the trouble to meet People of Other Faiths, we will likely find that many of them (perhaps more than some Christians!) are in fact experiencing "***the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, goodness, honesty, kindness, patience and self-control***" (Gal 5:22). Therefore, Saint Paul himself clearly stated that "***the Kingdom of God does not consist of food and drink but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit***" (Rom 14:17).

Moreover, our dear Pope Francis repeatedly tried his best to "broaden the horizons of our minds" over the 12 arduous years of his pontificate, with speeches galore and several noteworthy encyclicals, teaching about the Kingdom of God in our very needy world. What is needed of us Christians is not proselytism but new efforts of evangelism, through our joyful witnessing to the Person and values of Jesus Christ in our daily lives.

Pope Francis, when calling for the Holy Year 2025, explained: "*Hope is the central message of the coming Jubilee. My thoughts turn to all those pilgrims of hope who will travel to Rome in order to experience the Holy Year and to all those others who, though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Peter and Paul, will celebrate it in their local Churches. For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the "door" (Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as "our hope" (1Tm1:1)...*

"Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope..."

Hope, then, is both a virtue and a gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us right from the time we start our new life in God. But we must notice that this "spiritual" gift of hope is not the same as what people normally refer to as "hope". A child may "hope" for a certain toy as his/her Christmas gift, an adult may "hope" for a good job or a good partner in marriage, and so on. Therefore the Oxford dictionary defines "hope" as "a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen;" it adds that similar words are "aspiration, desire, wish, expectation."

We too, disciples of Jesus, may have plenty of worldly "hopes!" As a result, many of us do allow ourselves to be constantly influenced by the world's way of thinking, and give in to a culture of despair and doubt. Instead of holding on to a strong faith in God's providence and mercy, we find ourselves so often looking for quick solutions and passing pleasures. But as "disciples" of Jesus, we must make daily efforts to keep before us the example of Jesus' own attitude towards life and work, difficulties and joys. He struggled with trials right from the moment of his birth till his life of love and service for others ended on the Cross...

Moreover, "**spiritual hope**" **not only desires something good for the future, it expects it to happen; it not only expects it to happen, it is confident that it will happen. Such "hope" is an expectation with certainty that God will do what he has said, based on his promises and his character.** For example, Titus 2:13 says: "while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ!" We all say this at every Mass!

"*Hope does not disappoint us!*" Hope urges us on! Along with faith and love, hope keeps us going forward, so that we can face all trials in life with Jesus' strength and inner peace, "that peace which the world cannot give or take away!" And that essentially is the purpose of the Holy Year 2025, beautifully summed up in its motto, PILGRIMS OF HOPE.



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

THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY

- Norma Kamat

Pope Pius XII introduced this feast in the church calendar in October 1954, which was later moved by Pope Paul VI to August 22nd, within the octave of the Assumption, to emphasize the close connection between the two. This feast of 'The Queenship of Mary' is also celebrated in The Eastern Orthodox Church, and is deeply rooted in Scripture.

In the 4th century St. Ephrem named Mary, Lady and Queen. Later Church Fathers continued to use these terms during the 11th to 13th century.

Mary has been addressed as Hail Holy Queen, Hail Queen of Heaven, and in the fifth decade of the Dominican Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, she is invoked as The Queen of Angels and Saints.

TITLE ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE

Mary is called the Queen of Heaven as her son Jesus was named the King of Israel and the Heavenly King of the Universe declares Pope Pius XII (Lk1:32).

At the Visitation, Elizabeth addressed Mary as 'Mother of my Lord' (Lk1:43). On Jesus' Ascension into Heaven, God highly exalted him and gave him a name that is above all names, 'Jesus Christ the Lord' (Phil 2 :9-11). In the book of Rev 17:4, Jesus the Lamb is referred to as the 'King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.'

The Hebrew Bible refers to the king's mother in Israel and Judah, as 'Gebirah', the Queen Mother. She commanded great respect, and had an honoured place at the right side of the king's throne, influenced his decisions, and managed the royal household (1 Kgs 2:13-21). Mary is referred to as the 'Gebirah' of the New Testament.

St. Paul in Rom 8:28 says, that God has predestined human beings to share the image of his Son. Mary was predestined according to God's eternal plan to be the mother of his Son, so as Jesus was King of all Creation, she shares in his Kingship, and is entitled to be called, 'The Queen of the Universe.'

The Blessed Virgin Mary after she had fulfilled her role on earth as Mother of Christ, closely united to her son's mission of the salvation of mankind, died and was assumed into heaven, body and soul in heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord, as the Queen of the Universe, so that she be fully conformed to her son, the Lord of Lords, and the conqueror of sin and death (2nd Vatican Council) (Lumen Gentium 59).

LITANY OF LORETTO

Mother Mary is invoked in the Litany of Loretto as Queen of all categories of the good and holy; Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins, Queen of All Saints, Queen conceived without original sin, Queen assumed into Heaven, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Queen of Families and Queen of Peace. These invocations have been added on to the litany by different Popes from time to time, encouraging the faithful to implore her powerful intercession.

Book of Revelation - Chapter 12

The Queenship of Mary is depicted in Rev. Chpt.12, as a woman, the new Eve, clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars, symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel. The Blessed Virgin Mary is centred as the Mother Of The Church, and the entire Communion of Saints for all time, the church on earth (Church Militant), the dead being purified (The Church Suffering) and the Blessed in Heaven (The Church Triumphant). Mother Mary is carrying the Christ child in her womb, and giving birth to him in the world, signifying the pilgrim church in travail, suffering persecution amidst consolation, as its members go forth in faith to preach the gospel to the whole world.



MAGNIFICAT

In the Magnificat, this humble woman of Nazareth, Mary, overshadowed with the Holy Spirit, bursts out into this prophetic prayer of exaltation, praise and thanksgiving, acknowledging God's greatness and holiness, his merciful love shown to her, elevating her from her ordinary status, to this prestigious position as the Mother of God, The Queen Mother, and the Mother of the People of God, the church. She praises God who is all powerful and just, who exalts the humble and reveals himself to those who seek him. He is faithful to the promises he made to Israel, the People of God, through the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament, has shown them mercy and come to their help, even when they were unfaithful (Lk1: 46-55).

MARY AS MEDIATRIX

In heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary continues her role as Queen of the Universe and Mother of the Church. She intercedes for each of us, her children on earth, to conform to the image of Jesus, her son. As Mediatrix, she draws her power of intercession

through the merits of her son, who is the the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5).

The Church has instituted many feasts for the people of God to honour the Blessed Virgin as Virgin, Mother and Queen. She stands out in the order of grace as a model of faith, hope, burning charity and obedience. She adhered closely to the Father's plan of restoration of supernatural life to souls, through Jesus her Son and Saviour.

As we look up to our Mother and Queen shining in heavenly glory, and implore her powerful intercession, we feel comforted, cared for, and hopeful of our eternal salvation at the end of our earthly pilgrimage.



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.



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Freejo Vincent M, Thrichur

I have contributed an amount of Rs. 3000 via UPI for the welfare of the Balbhavan boys. They are doing extremely well in studies and extra-curricular activities.

Joan Kiran & Merrina Suvarna Kiran, Mumbai

We have donated an amount of Rs. 500 via NEFT towards the care and well-being of the Balbhavan children. They are extremely talented and will be putting up stalls in the Fr. Agnel Ashram Compound, during the Bandra Feast. We have seen their excellent paintings and other works of art last year.

Rabia J. Khan, Mira Road

I have contributed an amount of Rs.1250 as a monthly sponsorship for a child. It is good to do our best for the betterment of society.

Josephine M. Machado, Bandra

I am grateful to donate an amount of Rs.10,000 for the educational and other requirements of the Balbhavan boys. They are happy to receive our help and support.

Shilpa Sanjay Gonsalves, Vasai

My contribution of an amount of Rs.14,000 is towards the welfare and expenses of the Balbhavan boys. The Ashram Fathers are taking good care of their education and other needs.

VAILANKANNI: LOURDES OF THE EAST

- Jubel D'Cruz

It is well known that the history of the devotion to 'Our Lady of Velankanni' is traced back to a small town in Velankanni (also spelt as 'Vailankanni') located near Nagapattinam to the South of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. It is believed that Our Lady (Mother Mary) dispensed miracles to mankind through three significant appearances to ordinary people at different locations in and around the small town of Vailankanni in Tamil Nadu. Her first appearance with the infant Jesus in her arms was to a Hindu boy carrying milk. In the second incident, Our Lady appeared and cured a crippled boy selling buttermilk, after which people started calling her 'Mother of Good Health'. In her third appearance, she rescued some Portuguese sailors from a violent storm that took place in the Bay of Bengal.

On being taken to the thatched chapel at Vailankanni by the local fishermen, as a gesture of thanksgiving to Our Lady (Mother Mary), the sailors set up a small permanent structure which today has grown into a huge sprawling township.

The entire church is constructed in Gothic style. Before beginning with the architecture and beauty of the church, I want to share with you the entire story behind the name given to the church. It is because of a series of three events, perhaps even more that took place in the 16th century. The first event deals with a Hindu boy who sold milk. He was resting under a huge banyan tree near a water pond to take rest, as he was tired of walking a long way.

At that time, the Virgin Mary appeared before him and asked him for some milk. Without hesitating, the boy willingly gave her some, which she fed to the infant Jesus she was carrying in her arms. When the boy went to his customer's home to deliver the milk, he gave him the remaining milk and told him the reason for his delay as well as the less amount of milk that the pot had. When the customer looked into the pot, he was amazed to see that the pot was full of milk to the brim.

Amazed at this wonderful sight, he asked the boy to show him the place where Our Blessed Mother had appeared. The boy then took him to the same place where Our Lady had appeared. The man was in great joy to see Our Blessed Mother standing before him with a smile on her face and today the place where the Mother of Jesus appeared is called 'Matha Kulam' in Tamil ('Matha' means 'Mother' and 'Kulam' means 'Pond').

The second event took place when Our Lady appeared to a lame boy selling buttermilk near a public place. The boy was a Hindu. This time, Our Lady asked him for some buttermilk and the boy willingly gave her some. As Our Blessed Mother appeared before the boy, he was instantly cured.

Our Lady asked the boy to inform about her appearance to a wealthy gentleman in the same village. The boy stood up and began running towards the man's house.

When the boy told the man about Our Blessed Mother's appearance, he believed in it, as Our Blessed Mother had also told him to build a chapel

in his dream the previous night.

The third incident took place in the mighty ocean of the Bay of Bengal. A few Portuguese sailors were sailing to India and due to a violent storm, the ship got wrecked and all the sailors in it were struggling for their life, as the ship would sink any moment. The sailors had a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the ship and when they started praying to her, she heard their prayers and saved them from the violent storm.

When the sailors reached the shores of Velankanni, they were taken by the local people to the small chapel built during the second event. As a sign of gratitude and devotion to Our Lady, they later built a permanent chapel (a much bigger one) in the same place.

In the years that followed, the Portuguese people



rebuilt the chapel and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin Mary by giving her the name 'Our Lady of Good Health.'

Shrine of Our Lady of Good Health of Velankanni

Irla, situated just off Swami Vivekananda Road between Vile Parle and Andheri (West) in Mumbai, is a well known landmark, thanks to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Health of Velankanni. It was in October 1967 that the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME) touched base in Irla (a suburb in Mumbai). At the midnight Mass on December 25, 1968, Rev. Fr. Bruno Venturin (PIME) announced that he would build a chapel for the people of Irla and the chapel was officially inaugurated on April 14, 1968 (Easter Sunday).

The opinion of the then parishioners was divided on dedicating the chapel either to 'Infant Jesus of Prague' or to 'Our Lady of Velankanni.' One of the parishioners who is no more today, moved by the tremendous devotion and miraculous powers of the Shrine Basilica of 'Our Lady of Good Health' in Vailankanni, prevailed to the others that the church should be named 'Our Lady of Vailankanni' and Rev. Fr. Bruno Venturin hoisted the flag to mark the commencement of the first novena service in honour of 'Our Lady of Velankanni' at Irla on August 30, 1968, which was followed by an official declaration of the Shrine as a quasi parish on September 8, 1968, i.e. the feast of the Nativity of Our Blessed Mother Mary.

Annual novenas from August 30 to September 7, followed by the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady on September 8, are a grand celebration of the faith of the devotees. Devotees from in and around Mumbai, and also from overseas and other parts of India, including those of other faiths visit the church throughout the year. For around five centuries, pilgrims have been coming to the shrine praying to Our Lady for various needs and thanking her for the favours received through her kind intercession.

In Mumbai, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount, commonly known as Mount Mary Church, is a popular pilgrimage site where people of all faiths pay homage to Our Lady all the year round. In September, the annual fair typically runs for about a week, though the exact dates vary each year.

Also known as the Mount Mary Fair, the Bandra Fair is an annual week-long festival starting on the Sunday following September 8th, which is the feast of the Nativity of Mary at the Mount Mary Church. This

vibrant celebration is deeply rooted in the history of the area and the local community, attracting thousands of devotees and visitors each year.

It's a common belief that ever since our Blessed Mother set foot on the sacred soil of Vailankanni some 500 years ago, she has been pouring out her tender motherly care and compassion on all her children, who are tossed about on the sea of suffering and who come to her shrine at Vailankanni seeking her help. That is reason she is revered in Vailankanni as the 'Mother of Good Health'.

Vailankanni is also fondly known as the 'Lourdes of the East' because like Lourdes in France, millions of pilgrims visit the shrine all throughout the year.

We recite the Litany of our Lady in the course of the rosary and we find that Mary is referred to with so many titles like 'Our Lady of Vailankanni', 'Our Lady of Guadalupe', 'Our Lady of Mount Carmel', 'Our Lady of Lourdes', 'Our Lady of Fatima', 'Our Lady of Garabandal', 'Our Lady of Sorrows', 'Our Lady of Dolours', 'Our Lady of Good Counsel', 'Queen of Angels' and 'Mother of Perpetual Succour', to name a few. These titles have been given to her by the Catholic Church.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a central figure in Christianity, revered for her faith, obedience, and role in the Incarnation. She is considered a model of motherhood and a powerful intercessor for believers. Her story, as depicted in the Gospels, highlights her humility, courage, and unwavering trust in God's plan.

Many believe that praying the three Hail Marys to Our Blessed Mother daily brings about special graces and blessings. Praying the Hail Marys is a way to remember Mary's love and mercy in our daily lives. It is believed that Mary will assist those who practice this devotion of praying the Hail Marys, both in life and at the hour of their death. This devotion is also seen as a way to combat sin, particularly sins of impurity, and to grow in holiness.



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.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Bandra

Conceicao Rodrigues Memorial Debate (CRMD) 2025, a resounding success

The Conceicao Rodrigues Memorial Debate (CRMD) 2025, the flagship national-level annual debate competition of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering (FRCRCE), Bandra, Mumbai, was successfully held on the 22nd and 23rd of August 2025. This prestigious event brought together 32 premier teams hailing from across the country, reaffirming CRMD's legacy as one of the most distinguished debating platforms.

This year's edition was hosted under the theme “**The Grand Chessboard: Moves of the Modern Empire.**” The metaphor of the globe as a chessboard allowed participants to explore issues of geopolitics, power struggles, diplomacy, and the strategies of modern empires through rigorous debate and thoughtful discourse.

After the League Rounds, the top-performing teams advanced to the Quarter-Finals, followed by the Semi-Finals. The much-anticipated Grand Finale was held in Samvaad Auditorium, in the presence of renowned journalist, **Chief Guest, Dr. Sanjay Jog**, and **Guests of Honour, Ms. Purvi Bhawe and Mr. Adit Ganguly**. The final debate stood as a true intellectual spectacle, a culmination of wit, logic, eloquence, and strategy, perfectly embodying the essence of the theme and the spirit of CRMD.

SRM University, represented by **Januja P. and Swayam Krishnan**, emerged as the **Winners** and were awarded prize money of ₹40,000. The **Runners-Up** position was secured by **IIIT Nagpur**, with the team of **Saadullah Khwaja and Shlok Shah**, who received a prize of ₹25,000. In the individual categories, **Swayam Krishnan** was honoured with the title of **Best Speaker**, while **Sanjyot Umbrajkar** was recognized as the **Best Adjudicator**, each receiving a prize of ₹7,500.

Behind the seamless execution of CRMD 2025 was the relentless effort of the Students' Council, led by the Literary and Cultural Secretary, **Ms. Shreeya Kalbhor**, and the constant guidance of the CRMD Coordinator, **Dr. Joseph Rodrigues**.



Januja P. and Swayam Krishnan of SRM University, Chennai, receiving their prize from Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, director of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering (FRCRCE), Bandra, Mumbai.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Ambernath

The Silver Jubilee Inaugural Celebration: "Blessed Beginnings to a Golden Future"

Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College joyfully stepped into its 25th year of Excellence in Education with the theme "*Silver Steps to a Golden Tapestry*." The celebration was held on 13th August, 2025 in two parts – the solemn concelebrated Holy Eucharist presided over by His Lordship, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva (Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Bombay Archdiocese) and followed by a Cultural Program.



His Lordship, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva (centre) with other priests at the Silver Jubilee Inaugural Celebration of Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Ambernath.

In his inspiring homily, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva beautifully explained the true meaning of a Jubilee. He highlighted that a jubilee is not merely a record of the passage of years, but a sacred time of thanksgiving, renewal of commitment to God's mission. The School Manager, Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, in his address expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the dignitaries and guests and inspired the Agnelian family to continue to learn, serve and grow in faith.

The Principal, Mrs. Sonal Palaka, then presented the Annual Report, reflecting on the school's progress, achievements, and future vision. Her words were a testimony to the institution's dedication and resilience over the years. This was followed by the **unveiling of the Silver Jubilee Logo** by His Lordship, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, a proud moment that symbolized both the legacy of the past and the aspirations for the future.



A cultural program by the students.

One of the highlights of the program was the message by His Lordship, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, whose inspiring words encouraged the gathering to uphold the values of faith, service, and excellence. His message was followed by a Felicitation Ceremony in which His Lordship, Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, Rev. Fr. Savio Coutinho (Provincial Superior) and Rev. Fr. Angelino Vaz (Parish Priest, Our Lady of Fatima Church, Ambernath) were honoured with tokens of love and appreciation by Rev. Fr. Peter D'Souza (Regional Treasurer), Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza (Manager) and Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira (Administrator).

Investiture Ceremony at Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Ambernath: Weaving Values into Vision

The Investiture Ceremony for the academic year 2025–26, held on 21st July at Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Ambernath, was a grand and inspiring celebration of student leadership, commitment, and fresh beginnings. This year's ceremony held special significance, as it coincided with the commencement of the school's Silver Jubilee Year. Aligned with the milestone was the uplifting theme – “Silver Steps to a Golden Tapestry,” beautifully reflecting the legacy of the past 25 years and the aspirations for the journey ahead. A Student Council of Junior School leaders was designated to commemorate the Silver Jubilee Year.

In keeping with tradition, the outgoing Student Council marched in, followed by a heartfelt speech by the outgoing Head Girl, who expressed her gratitude and ceremoniously passed on the mantle of leadership to the new council.

The Manager, Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, officially announced the names of the newly appointed Student Council, who stepped forward with pride and enthusiasm to assume their roles as Head Boy, Head Girl, Assistant Head Boy and Head Girl and House Captains, together with Discipline, Dramatics, and Sports Captains.

The House Flags were handed over to the House Captains by their respective House Animators, each house representing a core value:

- ✦ Purple House – Benevolence
- ✦ Gold House – Kindness
- ✦ Blue House – Wisdom
- ✦ Green House – Integrity
- ✦ Red House – Fortitude

Next, each leader was adorned with a sash and badge, conferred by Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Administrator Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira, Principal Mrs. Sonal Palaka and Vice Principal Mrs. Juhi Lalwani.

In his motivational address, Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza urged the newly appointed student leaders to lead with values, vision, and unwavering purpose.



The school management with the newly elected Student Council.

Additionally, the event marked the inauguration of the School Theme Board – “Writer's Wall,” a dedicated space for student creativity and expression. This platform will feature original student work throughout the academic year, encouraging young minds to write, reflect, and express.

At work, at play - Agnelites shine all the way at Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Vashi



Anay Gangale, the first rank holder in Maharashtra state.

It's raining accolades at Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Vashi. Students have made the institute proud with stellar performances both in academics and sports.

Recently, the Maharashtra State Council of Examination, Pune, declared the results of the scholarship exam for classes V and VIII. Almost ten lakh students appeared for the exam from all over Maharashtra in both the urban and rural categories.

Out of a total of 495 scholarships awarded statewide in the Urban Category for class V, 20 belonged to students from Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Vashi. When it comes to the class VIII scholarships, 405 scholarships (Urban Category) were awarded statewide. A whopping 30 students from Fr Agnel, Vashi received the scholarship. And to top it all, Anay Gangale (currently in Std IX) secured the first rank in the state.

The exceptional results are a product of the combined efforts of students' perseverance and the continuous mentoring by a dedicated team of teachers.



Aditi Hegde

In swimming, Aditi Hegde and Mantra Kurhe have put their unique stamp in their respective disciplines. Aditi, a class X student, secured the gold medal in 1500 m freestyle and 200 m freestyle events and the silver medal in the 4 x 200 m relay at the Junior Nationals. On her way to winning the 1500 m gold, she also managed to shatter the eleven year old national record.

Mantra Kurhe, a student of class XI of Fr. Agnel Jr. College, Vashi secured the first position in a



Mantra Kurhe

2 km International Oceanman swimming competition held recently in Malaysia. She completed the swim in 36 minutes and 23 seconds to outperform swimmers from 37 nations in the 12 to 19 age group. She received the championship trophy for being the fastest female swimmer across all age groups, in the 2 km category.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Greater Noida

Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida, hosts the second edition of Model United Nations

Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida, hosted the second edition of the prestigious event, Model United Nations (MUN). The conference prominently propagated the ideals of Truth, Justice and Peace. VERUS MUN 2025 was graced by the Chief Guest, Mr. A. Bimol Akoijam, MP from Imphal.

The conference served as a platform that challenged the students to think critically, speak confidently, and collaborate with minds, equally passionate to think differently. It gave an opportunity to broaden the students' perspectives on global issues and hone their skills in diplomacy.

The enthusiastic delegates put up meaningful debates making the committee session vibrant and engaging under various committees such as UNGA, AIPPM, IP, UNCSW, ICJ, CRC REVIEW, UNODC and KARMBHOOMI.

The exchange of ideas and the friendships formed during the conference will be cherished forever. Cultural presentations such as jugalbandi of orchestra, classical music and dance echoed the tunes of harmony, unity and togetherness.

VERUS MUN was more than a conference - it was a journey of growth, learning, and unforgettable memories, instilling in the learners a sense of purpose to make a difference.



Dignitaries at the Model United Nations (MUN) 2025 conference.



A cultural performance being staged at Model United Nations (MUN) 2025 conference.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Greater Noida

Fr. Bento Champions Cup 2025 receives overwhelming response

The Fr. Bento Champions Cup, the prestigious football tournament organized in honour of Fr. Bento, a passionate advocate of sports and youth development, received an overwhelming response. A total of 77 teams competed across four categories, from 18th to 24th August, 2025, at Fr. Agnel Bal Bhawan grounds, Greater Noida.

In the U-14 boys category, Aster Public School, Greater Noida, was the winner while Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida, was the runner-up.

In the U-17 Girls category, Aster Public School, Noida, was the winner while Cambridge School, Greater Noida, was the runner-up.

In the U-18 Boys category, Somerville School, Greater Noida, was the winner while Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida, was the runner-up.

In the Open category, Brownie FC was the winner while Arewa FC was the runner-up.

The Inter-School Final held on 21st August 2025 was graced by Anadi Barua, former International Footballer, National Selector, and former Indian Women's Team Coach, who was the Chief Guest. The event was also honoured by the presence of Fr. Roy (Principal of Fr. Agnel School, Delhi), Sister Shilpa (Principal of Bethany Convent School), and Fr. Vicky as special guests. For the Open Category Final on 24th August 2025, the Chief Guest was Fr. Andrew (Parish Priest of St. Joseph Church), who encouraged the players with his inspiring presence.

The event was conceptualized by Fr. Jovito and executed under the leadership of Kartik Sahu, along with the seniors of Fr. Agnel Bal Bhawan, Greater Noida.



Somerville School, Greater Noida, the winner of the Fr. Bento Cup, in the U-18 Boys category.



Brownie FC, the winner of the Open category, make a happy picture with Fr. Bento Rodrigues (third from right) and Fr. Jovito Vaz (second from right).

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Greater Noida

Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida, secures 2nd Runner-up position in Under-16 Boys Interschool Basketball Tournament

The Under-16 Boys Basketball Team of Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida secured the 2nd Runner-up position in the Interschool Basketball Tournament, organized by Niscort Fr. Agnel School, Vaishali. The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from reputed schools of the region, where the Fr. Agnel School Team displayed exceptional skill, discipline, and teamwork. The players showcased great spirit and determination, earning appreciation for their performance on the court. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the students and coaches.



Rev. Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho (third from left) , editor of Fr. Agnel Ashram News, seen with the talented Under-16 Boys Basketball Team of Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida.



Students of Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida selected for State Basketball Team

Zoya, Rashi, and Kajal from Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida, have been selected for the state basketball team. They are part of the 15-member squad chosen from 89 girls from the district. They will represent the Gautam Budh Nagar team in the State Basketball Championship in Kanpur.



The squad that will represent the Gautam Budh Nagar team in the State Basketball Championship in Kanpur.

CELEBRATING THE ARCHITECTS OF TOMORROW: A TRIBUTE TO TEACHERS

- Lavita Rodrigues

"Teaching is the greatest act of optimism," says renowned artist Colleen Wilcox. This profound statement resonates deeply with educators and parents alike, reminding us of the transformative power of teaching and the boundless potential that lies within every student.

As we commemorate Teacher's Day on 5th September, the birthday of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, former President of India, we pay tribute to the unwavering dedication, unrelenting passion, and profound impact of educators worldwide.

Teachers are the master craftsmen of minds, inspiring hearts and guiding futures with precision and care. My own journey has been profoundly shaped by the exceptional teachers I've had the privilege of encountering. Their tireless efforts, patience, and commitment to nurturing young minds not only inspired me to become a teacher but also instilled in me the virtues that define my personal and professional life.

A Mother's Perspective

As a mother of three – Enoch, Eli, and an equally talented daughter Jemimah Rodrigues, who excels in sports – I've had the unique opportunity to navigate the delicate balance between academics and extracurricular activities from both a parental and pedagogical perspective. My daughter's journey, in particular, has been a testament to the importance of harmonizing these two aspects of her life. I'm grateful to Principal Sr. Blanche Rodrigues and the St. Joseph's Convent staff for their unwavering support, as she embarked on this journey.

Biblical Wisdom in Action

The biblical proverb "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6) has been a guiding principle in our approach. We began and ended each study session with prayer, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to prioritize and focus on the most critical aspects of her studies. As her cricket coach and father, Ivan Rodrigues, and I worked in tandem to ensure she excelled in both sports and academics, citing examples of Indian cricketers like Anil Kumble, Prasanna, Shikha Pandey and so many more, who have successfully balanced their sporting careers with academic pursuits.

Overcoming Challenges

The road to success was not without its challenges. With barely six days to the board exams, my daughter returned from back-to-back tournaments, exhausted but determined. It was a daunting task to cover the vast syllabus in such a short span. However, with faith and determination, we crafted a meticulous study plan. Through unwavering dedication and divine guidance, my daughter achieved an impressive 80% in her exams. All glory belongs to God.

A Message for Parents

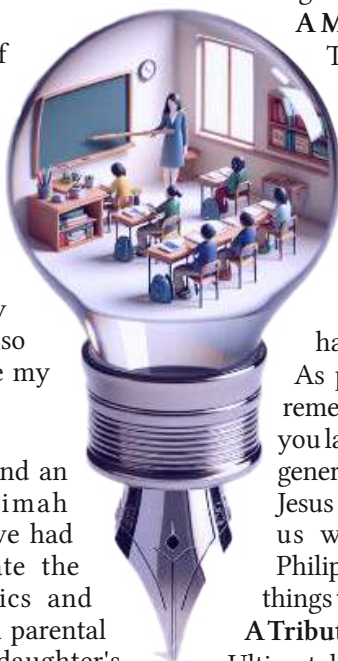
To parents, I would say: encourage your children to pursue their passions, whether it's sports, public speaking, dance, painting, or any other field that sparks their interest. My sons, Enoch (cinematographer, editor, video grapher, has his own production house) and Eli (musician, music arranger, recordist) have found their calling.

As parents, when faced with uncertainty, remember the wisdom of James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach." Our Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate teacher, guiding us with love, wisdom, and truth. As Philippians 4:13 reminds us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

A Tribute to Teachers

Ultimately, it's the teachers who bring out the best in our children, and to them, we owe a debt of gratitude. To all teachers – in classrooms, homes, or communities – your tireless efforts make a profound difference in the lives of your students. You shape the leaders, thinkers, and dreamers of tomorrow, leaving an indelible mark on the world that transcends time and space. Your influence is eternal.

Happy Teacher's Day. May you continue to inspire your students.



Lavita Rodrigues, Proprietor of Scholars' Coaching Institute, Bandra West, provides expert guidance to Std 8th - 10th SSC board students, fostering academic excellence. She is the mother of Jemimah Rodrigues, a member of the Indian women's cricket team.

CALLED TO INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

- Fr. M.K. George, SJ

In response to my earlier piece on the call to ecumenism, a priest friend - himself a prolific writer - shared an experience with me. A few years ago, during a conversation, a bishop confided in him his concerns about the administration of the diocese. At one point, the bishop remarked, “*I really don't see the point of having two of the departments in the diocese: Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue.*”

The priest was stunned. He kept silent, wondering what the future of the Church might hold under such ambiguous leadership. Sadly, this is not an isolated sentiment. There is a growing crisis in the call to inter-religious dialogue.

Jesus: A Model for Dialogue

Before anything else, let us look at Jesus himself. The Gospels reveal his remarkable openness to people of other faiths and cultures: The Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1–42): Jesus not only engaged a Samaritan - whose community held a different theology and sacred site from the Jews - but also broke cultural taboos by speaking with a woman in public, engaging in deep theological discussion. The Roman Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8:5–13): Jesus publicly praised the faith of a pagan, saying it surpassed anything he had found in Israel. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37): In this parable, the moral hero is a religious outsider, challenging entrenched prejudices. The Syrophenician Woman (Mark 7:24–30): Crossing both cultural and religious boundaries, Jesus not only conversed with a Canaanite woman but also healed her daughter.

In these encounters, Jesus set a clear pattern: a readiness to cross boundaries, challenge biases, and recognize faith wherever it was found.

The Church's Engagement Through History

For centuries, the Catholic Church's engagement with other religions was largely polemical, apologetic, or conversion-oriented - often intertwined with colonial expansion. This continued until the early 20th century.

The Second Vatican Council marked a turning point. In a profound shift, *Nostra Aetate* (1965) affirmed respect for truth and holiness in other religions, condemned anti-Semitism, and encouraged friendship with Jews, as well as dialogue with Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims. *Lumen Gentium* (1964) acknowledged elements of truth and sanctification outside the Church, and *Ad Gentes* (1965) urged a balance between proclamation and dialogue.

The fruits were remarkable. Inter-religious dialogue centres flourished, inculturation experiments

blossomed, and successive Popes lent their encouragement. One of the most symbolic recent moments was the signing of the *Document on Human Fraternity* by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar in Abu Dhabi in 2019.

The Present Crisis

Today, religion is too often wielded by politicians as a weapon - to divide communities, incite violence, and consolidate power. We see: Muslim–Hindu tensions in parts of India (the unlawful arrest of two religious nuns in northern India remains fresh in our memory), Christian–Muslim divides in parts of Africa, Sunni–Shia rivalries in the Middle East, Persistent Islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Christian sentiment in the West. Immigration debates in Europe often take on a religious edge. Across the world, flashpoints abound.

Meanwhile, many inter-religious dialogue centres are inactive or ineffective. Social media platforms, however, thrive - amplifying inflammatory content, turning local disputes into global outrage, and reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

The Challenge Before Us

The late theologian Hans Küng wrote: “*There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions, and no peace among the religions without dialogue.*” The world urgently needs people - and places - of dialogue.

We must dream of every parish, every school, every college, and every social service centre of the Catholic Church becoming a hub for dialogue. Let us begin with the *dialogue of life*: celebrating one another's festivals, working together on service projects, and building friendships across boundaries. Deeper theological conversations can follow.

Late Pope Francis reminds us: “*Dialogue is born from an attitude of respect for the other person, from a conviction that the other person has something good to say...*”

This is not merely an option for the Church - it is an urgent call. And like all true calls, it begins not with structures, but with each of us.



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 gmtholil@gmail.com

JUST FOR FUN

- Christine D'Sylva

September is a favourite month for many especially as September 8th is the birthday of Our Lady and Bandra Feast is celebrated.

This month is a happy month when people look forward to the fun Bandra Fair.

So with that happy thought, let's begin ...

Interesting Facts

All about Candy



The earliest examples of candy date back to ancient Egypt, 2000 B.C where honey, fruits like dates and figs and nuts were combined to make sweet treats. The candy was used for religious ceremonies or as

luxury items.

The word candy first appeared in English around the late 1200s and candy was a luxury enjoyed by the wealthy, even ordinary rock candy was considered a luxury. Honey used to be the main ingredient in ancient times but in modern times, sugar (sucrose) derived from sugarcane or sugar beets is used along with sweeteners like corn syrup and molasses.

The English word candy is derived from the Arabic word *quandi* which means made of sugar.

The most popular candy innovations was the candy lollipop invented in 1908 by George Smith who named his creation Prelo Pop after his racehorse. Cotton candy, popular especially in the Bandra Fair, was invented by a dentist and a confectioner at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair as "fairy floss." Today, we call it candy floss.

The longest candy ever made was over 60 feet long and created in Alabama in 2002.

Quiz

All about Sweets



1. Which sweets are used even on space missions thanks to their mess free nature?
2. What did archaeologists discover when they uncovered Pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb?
3. When did Jelly Beans become

popular?

4. In which country did Gummy Bears originate?
5. Which chocolate in Japan is given to students before exams or to wish someone success?

Inspirational Story



A young couple moved into a new house. The next morning while having breakfast, the wife saw her neighbour hanging the washing outside on the clothesline.

"The laundry is not very clean, she does not know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better detergent," she commented very critically.

Her husband looked on but chose to remain silent. Now this happened every morning for more than a week.

Then one day the young woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line. She said, "Look she has finally learnt to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this?"

Her husband replied, "Today I got up early and I washed our windows well. They are now very clean."

The young wife realised she was seeing the laundry dirty because their own windows were not cleaned.

What do we learn?

When we judge others, we often judge them on the clarity of the windows through which we look. Judging a person negatively does not define who they are but it defines who you are. Of course we may be right about our negative judgements sometimes but often enough we must not be too quick to point out the failings of others. If our perspective of life is filled with negativity like jealousy, anger, unfulfilled desires, we tend to judge others more harshly and rarely can utter a kind word or praise easily.

Smile Please



1. "Dear," a lady calls to her husband in another room, "Do you ever get a shooting pain in your stomach or chest as if someone is sticking a pin into a voodoo doll of you?"

"No, dear. I feel fine," shouts the husband from the living room after thinking a while.

A minute later came the anxious query, "How about now?"

2. Upon receiving the restaurant bill, a dad fed up of his spoilt son's demands for the most expensive items on the menu said, "You got this one" and passed the bill to the child.

3. American football teams favour ferocious names like the Lions, the Bears and the Giants! But oddly European names of teams are very mild such as The Toffees, The Biscuitmen, The Old Lady, The

Anchovies, The Baggies. Hardly the names to strike fear into their opponents.

4. Research has proved that women who are overweight tend to live longer than their husbands who dare mention it.

5. Little Tommy complained of a tummy ache. His mother said, "It is because your stomach is empty. Once you put something in it you will feel a lot better."

So Tommy ate and felt better. That evening, his father arrived home complaining of a headache.

Tommy quipped instantly, "That is because your head is empty. You will feel better if you had something in it."

Naturopathy

The science of nature for healing



1. Dates consist of iron and fibre good for health. Dates lower high cholesterol and promotes heart health.

2. To treat arthritis problems try to have in warm water a tablespoon of

honey and half a tablespoon of cinnamon.

3. Drink two glasses of water at least thirty minutes before each meal to help in weight loss and better digestion.

4. Vitamin D3 is very important. It has been linked with various health issues like heart disease, cancer, depression, muscle pain etc. A lack of Vitamin D3 can also cause hair loss and thinning. So get plenty of sunshine and if not very possible, consider taking a vitamin D3 as a supplement which is often available in many calcium tablets although do check the labels.

The value of Onions



Onions are popular in Indian cuisine. Many dishes use onions particularly the Indian curries. Yet did you know just how important onions are with their rich nutrient and antioxidant content.

They can improve immune function, reduce the risk of heart disease and can protect against certain cancers.

They regulate blood sugar levels and promote healthy digestion. Thus their use in food has a very scientific basis too and not just for taste. Onions are a good source of vitamin C, vitamin B6 and folate. They also contain potassium and magnesium.

Onion juice has today become very popular as a kind of antidote to hair fall because of the sulphur content. Applying onion juice on one's scalp before shampooing is said to control hair fall. The market is flooded with onion oils and shampoos. Studies conducted have shown that onion juice is good for hair although it might not benefit everyone. A study

found that 86 percent of patients with alopecia areata experienced hair regrowth after using onion juice for six weeks. Yet a patch test must be done before applying it to test for any adverse reactions.

We can conclude onions, the small humble onion is a powerhouse of nutritional benefits.

Inspirational Quotes

Audrey Hepburn, Hollywood actress



1. Remember if you ever need a helping hand, it is at the end of your arm.

2. Nothing is impossible, the word itself says I'm possible.

3. For beautiful eyes look for the good in others, for beautiful lips speak only words of kindness and for poise, walk with the knowledge

that you are never alone.

4. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself and the other for helping others.

5. You can tell more about a person by what he says about others than you can by what others say about him.

6. The Third World is a term I don't like very much because we are all one world. I want people to know that the largest part of humanity is suffering.

What's the Good Word?

All about stars



1. The amount of stars a person can see at one time.

2. The colour of the coolest stars in the sky and the hottest.

3. The material most stars are made up of.

4. The brightest star in the night sky.

5. A green blue star that is also a dwarf star.

Brain Teasers



1. A man pushes his car to a hotel and tells the owner he is bankrupt. Why?

2. A man stands on one side of a river and his cat on the other. The

cat had gone on the other side without his consent. The man is not upset but calls to his cat who promptly crosses over without getting wet and without swimming. How is this possible?

3. The slowest timepiece with the fewest moving particles.

4. Your parents have four sons and each son has two sisters. How many people are in the family?

5. If $a = 45$ and b multiplied by a gives you 360 and c divided by $a = 5$, what are the values of b and c ?

World News



1. US core inflation to increase as higher tariffs push up prices.
2. South Korea's military shrinks by 20 percent as low birth rate hits recruitment
3. Sebastian C.M. aged 68 is a prime suspect in multiple murders and disappearances of women in Kerala over two decades. Police found charred bones, jewellery and belongings at his estate. DNA tests are ongoing and will confirm if he truly is the perpetrator of these crimes. Linked to property fraud and murder.
4. Gaza likely to face starvation as child deaths mount.

Happy News



The Ambani animal sanctuary called Vantara is a wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and conservation centre established by Anant Ambani and supported by Reliance Foundation.

Located in Jamnagar, Gujarat, this ambitious project spans 3,500 acres and serves as a refuge for abused, injured and endangered animals not just from India but around the world. It features advanced veterinary facilities, natural habitats and programs making it the world's largest animal rescue centre.

Most of the animals are elephants, big cats, primate and even birds.

Vantara also helps in community welfare for it creates jobs for the locals and provides sustainable practices in the surrounding areas.

Anant Ambani is the son of Mukesh Ambani and a board member of the Reliance Foundation. His passion for wildlife inspired the creation of this extensive sanctuary. Kudos to him!

Wisdom Message of the Month



Two pots, one of clay and one of brass were carried along the river current during a flood. The brass pot, being sturdy and strong suggested, "Please stick with me for I can protect you."

The clay pot however wisely declined, "Thanks for your kind offer. But since you are sturdy, you will be safe from any bumps while since I am made up of clay, I will shatter."

The clay pot being light chose to swim to the river bank on its own. Unfortunately the brass pot despite being sturdier was heavy and drowned, sinking to the bottom.

What do we learn?

We learn that one's perceived strength may not always be good, it can be a weakness. The clay pot accepted its fragility and had an independent nature. Instead of bemoaning its lack of strength and clinging on to the brass sturdy pot, it

chose to rely on its nature to help it navigate to the other side.

This tale makes us aware of the need to understand one's weakness and strength and become more self-reliant. This could also refer to the value of not letting harmful people influence our minds or giving into any kind of peer pressure. Peer pressure can be very strong and it may take the form of bullying. One must stand strong in one's moral convictions and be independent even if it does not make the other party very pleased.

Fit and healthy



We all know that fried foods especially deep fried food can be unhealthy. Everything in moderation is not very detrimental but if fried foods are had on a regular basis they do our body some harm. Pakoras, samosas, patties

may be consumed once in a while but definitely dangerous for our health if consumed every day.

Weight gain, increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers are some of the adverse consequences.

Sometimes people exercise by cycling, walking etc for a while and then promptly feeling very pleased with their efforts and very famished too, buy a bag of *pakor*as or samosas. Now this makes little sense. Exercise burns calories but not a lot unless you exercise very vigorously for quite a long time. So indulging in such high calorie snacks not only promptly puts on the weight but adds more weight although one thinks one has burnt many calories.

For example, even walking for an hour may burn just 200 to 600 calories while a big samosa can be laden with as many as 500 calories. So if you do the maths you will realise the folly of snacking on fried foods even if you exercise very faithfully.

Nowadays air fryers are available that can help reduce deep frying all snacks.

That's all for this month. Take care. Till next month...

Answers

Quiz

1. M & M's.
2. Licorice root.
3. During the American civil war.
4. Germany.
5. Kit Kat chocolates.

What's the Good Word?

1. 2000-2500
2. The red stars are the coolest and the blue stars the hottest.
3. Hydrogen
4. Sirius or Dog Star
5. The sun

Brain Teasers

1. He is playing monopoly.
2. The river was frozen.
3. A sundial.
4. 8.
5. $B=8$ $c=9$

Riddle Me

1. Wet.
2. Papa-ya.
3. Letters.
4. A potato.
5. Mushroom.



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 FOR 51 YEARS OF MARRIAGE

ANDHERI: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnelo for blessing us for 51 years of our married life. We indeed look up to the Venerable for good health and during difficult times.

- *E.P. Chacko & Maria Kutty Chacko*

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

VASAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has answered my prayers. Everything is possible when you pray. Even Jesus prayed to the Almighty God.

- *Sandeep Gonsalves*

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VIRAR: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for his intercession and all the blessings bestowed on me and my family.

- *Vandana Tuscano*

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

CANADA: Staying away from India, Ven. Fr. Agnel has interceded on our behalf when we needed it the most. We now enjoy a high standard of living.

- *Sylvester Macwan*

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

UNITED KINGDOM: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, we have been blessed in many ways. We make it a point to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra, whenever we are down in India.

- *Shinee Franklin Macwan*

THANKSGIVING FOR SECURING A GOOD JOB IN DUBAI

KING'S CIRCLE, MUMBAI: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have been blessed with a good job in Dubai. Thank you Venerable for answering my prayers..

- *Suma Paul*

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

BANDRA: I am a staunch devotee of Ven. Fr. Agnel and am thankful to him for all the blessings received.

- *Loreta Norton*

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

BANDRA: We often pray to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession. Our family has been blessed with good health.

- *Dorothy Roche*

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

KALINA: We have been blessed immensely by Ven. Fr. Agnel. I am indeed grateful for all the blessings received.

- *Catherine John*

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

NASHIK: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my family has been blessed in many ways. I make it a point to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra, Mumbai, to receive blessings.

- *Rita Vishwas Bhosle*

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

VASAI: We are indeed grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing us always. I like to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram, in Bandra Bandstand, Mumbai, whenever possible.

- *Sunil D'Silva*

THANKSGIVING FOR GETTING A JOB

BANDRA: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have been blessed with a good job. Everything is possible in prayer.

- *Albina Rodrigues*

THANKSGIVING FOR HOUSE WORK DONE

VILE PARLE MUMBAI: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession in helping me to get my house work done. I have faith in the Venerable.

- *Sandeep N. Bhatt*

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL FOR MY SON'S NEW JOB

KANDIVILI, MUMBAI: My prayers have been answered. Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my son has secured a good job and is happy in life.

- *Andrew Lobo*

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

Praveen M. Srivastava	Mumbai	51000	Mary Pereira	Mumbai	2000	Akshay Sonawane	Mumbai	1000
Mamta Rao	Mumbai	50000	Hope Anthony	Mumbai	2000	Tejal Dhruv	Mumbai	1000
Vince Fernandes	Mumbai	25000	Antony John	Mumbai	2000	Pushpa Dhruv	Mumbai	1000
Sijo John	Kerala	25000	Melissa Antony	Mumbai	2000	Precila V. D'Souza	Vasai	1000
Roshan Gonsalves	Mumbai	20000	Baby John	Mumbai	2000	Abhishek Serrao	Mangalore	1000
Francis Noronha	Mumbai	12000	Omana John	Mumbai	2000	Gerard & Andrea	Madhya Pradesh	1000
Reeta Jayakumar	Mumbai	12000	Arun Jadhav	Kolhapur	1500	Beroze F. Edulji	Mumbai	1000
Josephine M. Machado	Mumbai	10000	E.P. Chacko	Mumbai	1500	Pooja J. Waswani	Mumbai	1000
Farida D. Bhathena	Mumbai	10000	Gavin P. Fonseca	Mumbai	1500	Diana F. Edulji	Mumbai	1000
Goolrukh D. Bhathena	Mumbai	10000	Hiren Gala	Mumbai	1400	Abey E. Thomas	Alapuzha	1000
Andrew Lobo	Mumbai	10000	Melvyn J. D'Mello	Thane	1250	Maria S. Arputharaj	Tuticorin	1000
Thomas F. Correia	Virar	10000	Fransquinha Fernandes	Mumbai	1250	Mulraj Jayantilal Sheth	Mumbai	1000
Thomas George	Mumbai	10000	Rabia J. Khan	Mira Road	1250	Peter V. Fernandes	Mumbai	1000
Stacy Carvalho	Mumbai	7000	Monica D'Souza	Pune	1200	Abellecne F. Pereira	Kolhapur	1000
Vinith Varghese	Mumbai	7000	Rita Johnson	Trichur	1200	Mary Mathew	Kerala	1000
Lavina Reena Barboza	Mumbai	6000	Kaveer Thakker	Mumbai	1100	Cherupuzhpam	Kerala	1000
Warren Fernandes	Mumbai	6000	Aaradhya Mohite	Mumbai	1001	Thandamma T. P.	Ernakulam	800
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5100	Mary Antony	Kerala	1000	Pravin Salunkhe	Thane	501
Rajendra K. Parikh	Mumbai	5000	Dominic D'Almeida	Mumbai	1000	Mathew Kurian	Bangalore	501
Thomas Edward	Mumbai	5000	Anil Vaz	Palghar	1000	Swati Maru	Mumbai	501
Aryan Pereira	Mumbai	5000	Paresh M. Thakkar	Thane	1000	Anthony Nadar	Matunga	500
Rohit C. Lopes	Mumbai	5000	Preet Paresh Thakkar	Thane	1000	Samantha S. D'Britto	Palghar	500
Kavitha Ghoshal	Mumbai	5000	Yaksh Shrikant Thakkar	Thane	1000	Nergish P. Dastoor	Mumbai	500
Ashley Fernandes	Mumbai	5000	Ziva Mistry	Mumbai	1000	Diya Dedhia	Mumbai	500
O. V. Martha	Kerala	5000	Neha Naik	Palghar	1000	Sweedol Jamble	Mumbai	500
Falguni Solanki	Palghar	4000	Austin	Mumbai	1000	Devendra Patel	Palghar	500
Christina Noeline	Hyderabad	3500	Bernice	Mumbai	1000	Ashvin J. Shah	Mumbai	500
Jose T.K.	Kerala	3001	Ruchi Bhasin	Mumbai	1000	Sonali Shah	Mumbai	500
Aruna Naveen	Chennai	3000	Fittech Industries	Mumbai	1000	Rima Shah	Mumbai	500
Marian D'Souza	Mumbai	2560	Ankit G. Patel	Mumbai	1000	Aria Steel Clothing Llp	Mumbai	500
Kainaz Engineer	Mumbai	2501	Ghanshyan K. Patel	Mumbai	1000	Jyoti Khote	Mumbai	500
Shahnaz Engineer	Mumbai	2501	Sangita G. Patel	Mumbai	1000	Irene A. Domnic	Hyderabad	500
Linto Joy	Panvel	2500	Jinal Patel	Mumbai	1000	Cletus D'Souza	Mumbai	500
Suzanne D'Souza	Mumbai	2500	Rockhenry A. Chettiar	Mumbai	1000	Jude Gonsalves	Palghar	500
Sharon D'Souza	Mumbai	2500	Flemy Thekketh	Thrissur	1000	Rohan Jasani	Mumbai	500
Alice Sennen D'Souza	Mumbai	2500	Adler Fernandes	Palghar	1000	Hardik Jasani	Mumbai	500
Maria V. Fernandes	Bengaluru	2500	Jeff Ferreira	Palghar	1000	Sylvia D'Mello	Mumbai	500
Dominic Rodrigues	Mumbai	2000	Aruna Fernando	Tuticorin	1000	Celine D'Silva	Mumbai	500
Isabel Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2000	A.Santhappan	Kanyakumari	1000	Kalpna Sonawane	Mumbai	500
Lynette Lillian D'Cruz	Mumbai	2000	M.D. Mathai	Kozhikode	1000	Drishti Chalke	Mumbai	500
Cherag Bardolwala	Mumbai	2000	Placid M. Dabre	Thane	1000	Amit Kotecha	Mumbai	500
A.R. Elavia	Mumbai	2000	Harsh R. Shukla	Mumbai	1000	Neha Shastri	Mumbai	500
Clement Hinda	Mumbai	2000	Skeeter Chakranarayan	Mumbai	1000	Thangamani Antony	Mumbai	500
N.C. Babu	Palakkad	2000	Felix Pinto	Mumbai	1000	Melvin Joseph	Mysore	500
Rija Anna Francis	Kayamkulam	2000	John D'Cunha	Palghar	1000	Machado & Sons	Tuticorin	500
Attely Anto Kuttikadan	Mumbai	2000	Agnelo Nicholas	Mumbai	1000	R. Victor	Tirunelveli	500
Aditi M. Doshi	Mumbai	2000	Calvin D'Souza	Mumbai	1000	Anto Paul	Ernakulam	500
Danny Pereira	Mumbai	2000	Loreta Norton	Mumbai	1000	Niranjan M. Amolik	Ahmednagar	500
Anil Brahmane	Mumbai	2000	Brunet A. Antrades	Mumbai	1000	Geeta Pillai	Gujarat	500
Priscilla Pereira	Mumbai	2000				Pulin Dabhi	Gujarat	500

BOB'S BANTER

by Robert Clements

Treat Your Children Well..!

It happened in a store in Chicago. My daughter, busy shopping, suddenly noticed her two-and-a-half-year-old happily munching away on an apple. The little one, with all the innocence in the world, had simply plucked it from the display. My daughter, instead of panicking or scolding, calmly explained at the counter what had happened.

The cashier smiled, rang it in, and even offered to slice it up for the tiny culprit, who beamed with joy at this unexpected kindness. Yes, what the little one did was technically wrong - but was it a crime? No. And most importantly, she was not made to feel like a criminal. No thunderous voice of anger descended on her head, no threats of punishment loomed over her. Instead, there was kindness, a gentle correction, and a chance to learn.

And isn't that exactly what we need to do with our children?

them as hardened offenders, we risk producing adults who are either timid and afraid of the world, or ruthless and angry at it.

And here's the larger point. Look around at our rulers today. See the lack of compassion, the absence of kindness, the cruelty that passes for strength. Leaders in our country who can walk out on wives, betray friends, or abandon the weak — yet still strut about hailed as noble!

Where do such leaders come from? They are not imported from China, nor manufactured in Russia. They were children once — children who may have been shouted into silence, scolded into hardness, never taught kindness by example.

If we in India want a future that is kinder, more just, more human, then it begins not in Parliament, nor in political manifestoes, but in the homes where toddlers grab apples and mothers and those in



**Become a Powerful
Writer and Speaker!**

Taught by Robert Clements himself

Online course of 1 month
4 hours a week
and write like a Professional

- Write a Book
- Speak at functions
- Create change around you

Send a  to : **+91 98925-72883**

We live in times when a child scribbles on a wall and gets shouted at as though she had spray-painted Parliament. Or when a boy sneaks a chocolate and is punished like he had looted the Reserve Bank. Parents forget that these little ones are still learning the boundaries of right and wrong. Their curiosity often spills over into mischief, but mischief is not malice. Mischief is childhood's way of experimenting, of understanding the world.

Correct, yes. Condemn, no.

Because when we correct without crushing, we build children who grow up strong and confident. When we punish with understanding instead of humiliation, we raise men and women who believe in fairness, who can say sorry without shame, and who can forgive without hesitation. But if we treat

authority choose how to respond.

The child who receives correction wrapped in kindness grows up to be a kind adult. And kind adults, multiplied across a nation, can diffuse the unkindness choking us today.

So, treat your children well, my friends. Correct them, yes, but don't scar them.

Teach them right, but teach with a smile. And who knows, maybe the little hand reaching for an apple today might tomorrow extend to heal a nation...!

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



Over 400 men in U.S. to be ordained in 2025; most felt called to priesthood by age 16

More than 400 men will be ordained to the priesthood in the U.S. this year, and on average they began to consider becoming a priest at just 16 years old, according to the 2025 national survey of seminarians conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

The report is created in collaboration with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations and CARA to examine information on the men entering the priesthood in the U.S. each year.

On average, ordinands first started to consider becoming a priest at 16 years old, but 35% said they began to think about entering the priesthood in elementary school between the ages of 6 and 13. The survey found the graduating seminarians will be ordained at an average age of 34.

The study showed the ordinands' families and upbringings played pivotal roles in their paths to the priesthood.

The majority of ordinands reported both of their parents were Catholic when they were children and 95% said they were raised by their biological parents "during the most formative part of their childhood."

Nine in 10 responding ordinands (92%) were baptized Catholic as infants. Of those who entered the Church later in life, they converted at an average age of 22.

Half of responding ordinands said they participated in a parish youth group before entering the seminary and 35% said they participated in Catholic campus ministry. The study also found that 21% of ordinates were involved in Boy Scouts in their youth.

The majority of the respondents (73%) served as altar servers. About 46% served as lectors, 34% distributed holy Communion as extraordinary ministers, and 32% taught as catechists.

Many ordinands were inspired to become a priest by someone in their life. Thirty-one percent reported having, or previously having had, a relative who is a priest or religious who encouraged their entrance to the seminary.

While 89% reported being encouraged to consider the priesthood by someone in their life, 43% said they felt discouraged by one or more persons when deciding to enter the seminary. The report found that most often that person was a friend or family member.

- Catholic News Agency

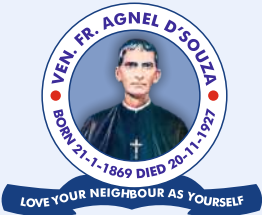
Regn. No. of Publication RNI-9473/64
Date of Publication 10th of every month
Date of posting 14th & 15th of every month
Single copy Price Rs. 15/-
Annual Subscription Rs. 150/-
Total pages including cover : 28

PRN - MCN/175/2024-2026
to post at concession rate on 14th & 15th
Licence to post without prepayment
No. MR/TECH/WPP-87/NORTH/2021-2023
at Bandra Post Office, West, Mumbai - 400 050.



Happy
Teacher's
Day! ☆ 🍷 ☆

The seeds you planted will bloom forever.



If not delivered please return to

FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

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

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



Email us at : fragnelashrambandra@gmail.com | Website : www.agnelashram.org