FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

OCTOBER 2026



OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY

Pray for us!





99th Death Anniversary Novena Program of Ven. Fr. Agnel D'Souza

at FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

Bandstand, Bandra

from 11th to 19th November, 2026

MORNING	EVENING
7:00 am & 9:30 am	6:00 pm
ENGLISH	ENGLISH
Holy Mass and Novena Prayer	Holy Mass and Novena Prayer

On Sunday15th November, all Masses and Novena Services will be held as on normal Sundays.

On Sunday15th November, Novena Service will be in Gujarati at 3:00 pm

FRIDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER
MASS FOLLOWED BY NOVENA PRAYERS IN ENGLISH
7:00 AM & 9:00 AM

FRIDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER AT 6:00 PM
SOLEMN EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION BY



BISHOP OF AURANGABAD

Through the loving intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, countless favours and remarkable cures, including those from cancer, TB and paralysis, have been received.

With faith in God and trust in his intercession, devotees may send their petitions and testimonies to the following address:

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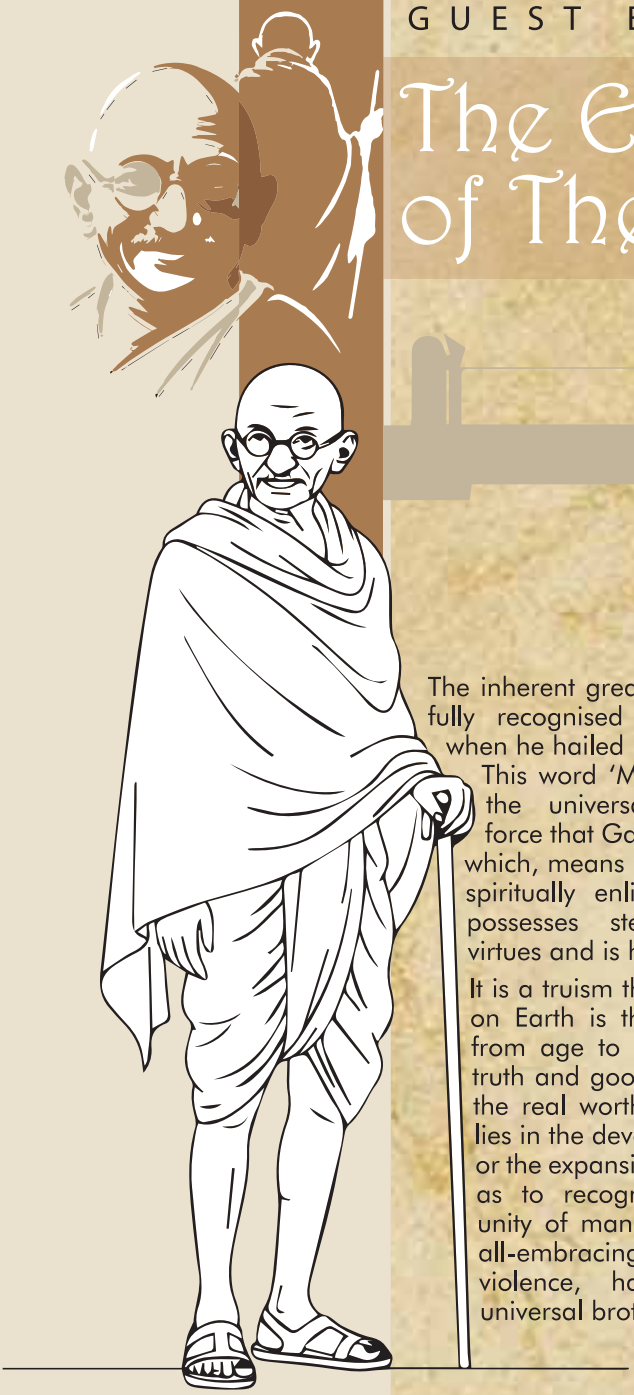
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NOVEMBER

GUEST EDITORIAL

The Eternal Lustre of The Mahatma



The inherent greatness of Gandhiji was fully recognised by Gurudev Tagore when he hailed him as the 'Mahatma'. This word 'Mahatma' encapsulates the universally accepted moral force that Gandhiji was. 'Mahatma' which, means 'great soul', signifies a spiritually enlightened person who possesses sterling ethico-spiritual virtues and is held in high esteem.

It is a truism that 'the history of man on Earth is the growth of his soul from age to age in his search for truth and goodness'. In this context, the real worth of human character lies in the development of spirituality or the expansion of consciousness so as to recognise the fundamental unity of mankind and cultivate the all-embracing love, peace, non-violence, harmony, justice and universal brotherhood.

Even though Gandhiji was saintly in his life and was lovingly called 'Saint of Sabarmati', he was extremely modest and self-effacing. He publicly declared: "I have become literally sick of the ado.,ration. My mahatmaship is worthless...I don't feel like being one....often the title has pained me and there is not a moment I can recall when it may be said to have tickled me. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of many fellow beings wear and I am therefore as liable to err as any...I claim to be no more than an average man with less than average ability.

A devout Hindu, Gandhiji embodied the triune virtues of Satya (Truth), Ahimsa (Non-violence) and Anasakti (Non-attachment) and lived a simple and austere life. He assiduously lived up to the age-old dictum - manasyekam, vachasyekam, karmanasyaekam mahatmnaha which sets forth three qualities, that a Mahatma is one who maintains perfect uniformity in his thought, word and deed. He utters words which express his thoughts and then translates them into actions which promote the good of others. In this respect Gandhiji practiced what he preached and his autobiography My Experiments with Truth bears eloquent testimony to this fact.

The sheet-anchor of his Dharma (religion) was his firm belief in the existence of God as the creator, controller and dispenser of the destiny of all. And, God being immanent as well as transcendent, He is beyond the grasp of all sensory perception and reason. Gandhiji regarded prayer as - 'the very soul and essence of religion', and he sincerely prayed to God every day and declared that prayer is a potent means of realising God. He said, "I am being daily led nearer to it (Truth/God) by constant prayer."

A votary of Truth - Gandhiji had an abiding faith in the absolute universal values of Truth, Love, Ahimsa and Justice and persistently endeavoured to preach and practice them. So deep and unshakable was his faith in Truth that he considered it a synonym of God.

Ibonio D'Souza



Our Lady on the Pillar

On 12th October Pilar Fathers of the Society of the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier (Society of Pilar) celebrate the feast of their patroness, Our Lady of Pilar. The word 'pilar' in the Spanish language means pillar on which Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to James, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus at Zaragoza in Spain in the 1st century while she was still living in Jerusalem. Following the command of Jesus to the apostles "Go into the entire world and preach gospel to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15), James reached the territory of Spain, then the Roman Province of Hispania. His preaching fell on deaf ears and he was heartsick at his unsuccessful mission of bringing Christianity to the region. At that juncture he remembered Blessed Virgin Mary.

According to the ancient Spanish tradition, on 12th October 40 AD, the Virgin Mary appeared to James while he was praying at the bank of Ebro River in Zaragoza. The apostle, tired and defiant with a pressing desire to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all, entrusted his discouragement to prayer. It was in this context that a miracle happened before his eyes. Enveloped in a dazzling light, the Virgin Mary appeared in a bilocation. She encouraged him to preach the Gospel in that region and extended him her maternal help and care and also told him to consecrate a church in that place in her honour. After this apparition his mission of preaching was successful and the Hispanic people accepted the faith in Jesus Christ. This is the first and the only apparition of Virgin Mary while she was still alive. While she appeared to James on a pillar of jasper,

to watch over us



the angels held the pillar in their hands. They left that pillar at the place of the apparition as a symbol of protection and to mark the spot where she appeared. In 40 AD James built a chapel over there and placed the apparition pillar in it. The devotees of Our Lady of Pilar began revering this pillar. Later the chapel was raised to the status of a church and came to be known as 'Iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Pilar.' In the year 1930, Pope Pius XI granted to this church the status of a basilica known as 'Basilica de Nuestra Señora del Pilar.'

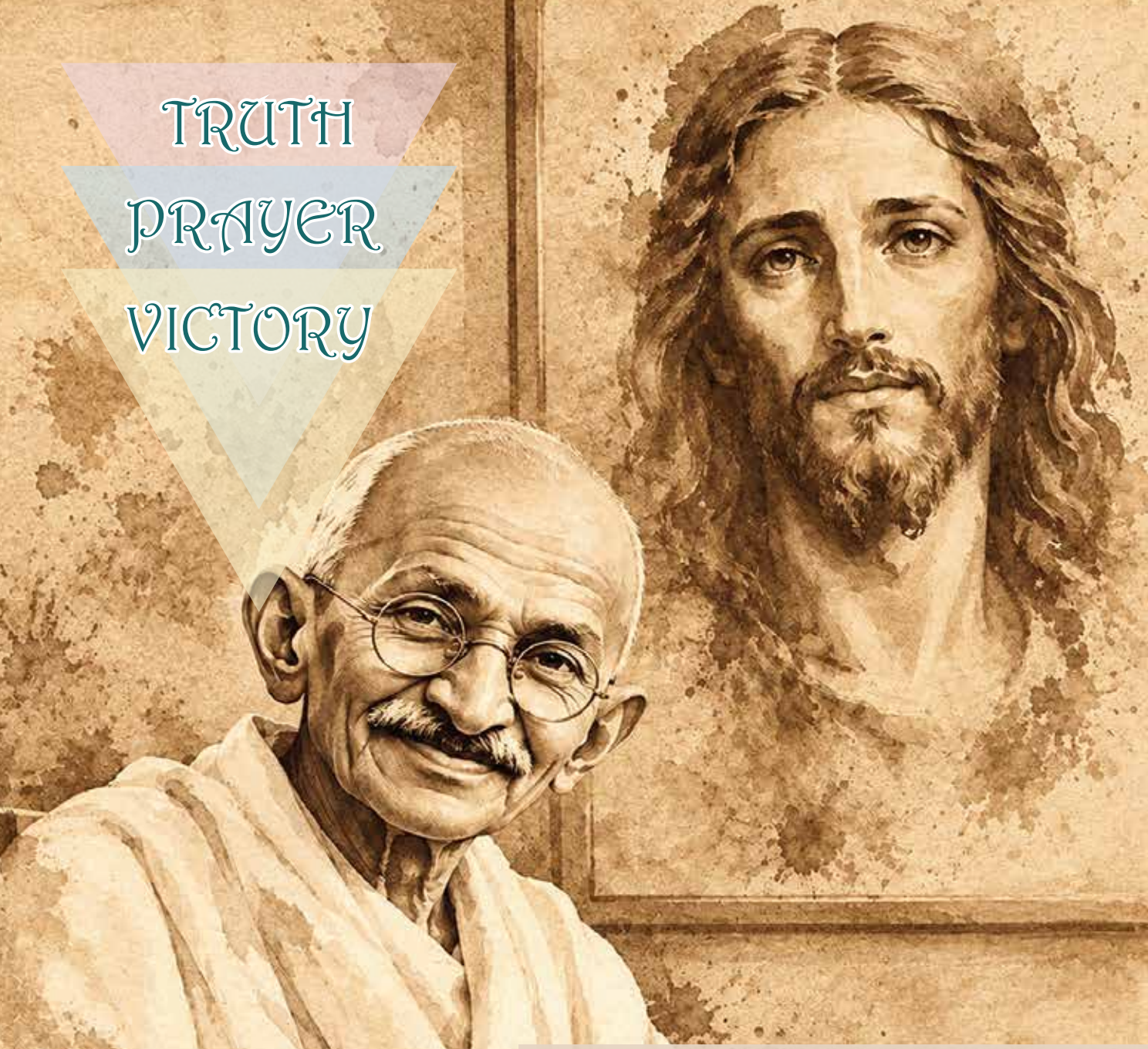
Franciscan Capuchins brought this devotion to Our Lady of Pilar to Goa in the 17th century. In 1613 on a hillock in the vicinity of Goa Velha they built a monastery and a church attached to the monastery which was dedicated to Our Lady of Pilar. Since then the hillock came to be known as Pilar. The then General Commissioner of the Franciscan Order (Capuchins), Fr Luis da Conceicao gets the credit of constructing the monastery at Pilar. Fr Manuel Baptista from Daman prepared the architectural plan. Archbishop of Goa Dom Christóvão de Sá Lisboa laid the foundation stone on 17th July 1612. The construction was supervised by Fernao de Chromo and Amaro de Rocha. The Franciscan Capuchins found Pilar hillock conducive for prayer and meditation. The Church attracted the Catholics living below Pilar hillock to climb up and spend time in prayer and attend Mass. Hindus began to climb it and light candles in the church in honour of Our Lady of Pilar. The statue of Our Lady of Pilar placed on the pedestal in the church was brought from Spain in 1952. After worshipping this statue in the Basilica de Nuestra Señora del Pilar at Zaragoza in Spain for three days, it was brought to Pilar and kept in an honourable place in the church. Archbishop-Patriarch of Goa Dom Antonio Sebastião Valente gifted the monastery to the Society of Pilar which was founded by Fr. Bento Martins in Agonda. After shifting the headquarters of the Society from Agonda to Pilar on 4th February 1890, the Society adopted Our Lady of Pilar as its patroness and thereafter the Pilar Fathers began celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Pilar every year on 12th October solemnly with great ardour and devotion. On the day of Vespers preceding the feast, a procession with the statue of Our Lady of Pilar is being organized from the Minor Seminary at Batim to the Mission Seminary on Pilar hillock followed by Vespers. On the way the Catholic and Hindu families living below the Pilar hillock garland the statue of Our Lady of Pilar with flowers and some of them incense it devoutly.

October 12, 1492, the feast of Our Lady of Pilar, is the day the explorer Christopher Columbus first sighted American land, and when the first Mass in the Americas was celebrated. The Spanish missionaries carried the devotion of Our Lady of Pilar to all the Spanish colonies i.e. in Latin America and Philippines. The devotion to Our Lady of Pilar is deeply rooted in Hispanic American countries and in the 18th century Our Lady of Pilar was declared as the patroness of the Hispanic American people. In some of the South American countries and Philippines churches are named after Our Lady of Pilar. Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay have Basilicas dedicated to Our Lady of Pilar. In Goa there are two Churches dedicated to Our Lady of Pilar, one at Pilar and the other one is at Seraulim built in 1630 and raised to a full-fledged parish on 28th May 1635.

The feast of Our Lady of Pilar is celebrated in the mission stations of Pilar Society with great love and devotion. Pilar Fathers' churches at Dholpur in Rajasthan, at Shantinagar in Bhopal (MP), at Chiraiyan in Jharkhand, at Manmao in Arunachal Pradesh, at Sindoni in Nagar Haveli, at Pokhara in Nepal and the mission station in Rampuraphul, Punjab are named after Our Lady of Pilar. We have our Mother Mary on a pillar who oversees the well-being of all the Pilar missionaries. The Pilar Fathers owe their gratitude to her for loving, guiding and protecting them.

Fr. Eusibo Gomes s.f.x.

TRUTH PRAYER VICTORY



OCTOBER IS A MONTH TO REJOICE IN! The Feast of the holy Rosary invites us to trust in Mary's loving intercession on our behalf, and the birth anniversary of the Father of our Nation highlights the startling truth of Satyameva jayate, that truth is not a naïve policy for fools and the weak! TRUTH, PRAYER, VICTORY – AN INFALLIBLE COMBINATION, THOUGH INVOLVING A LOT OF PERSONAL SACRIFICES AND SUFFERING!

The teaching begins with our Lord and Guru, Jesus Christ. It[D1.1] was not a flamboyant teaching, but something that Jesus practiced daily. And so did Mother Mary, and so did the Mahatma. He too was a disciple of Jesus, though not a sacramentally baptized one. He can also truly be called a disciple of Jesus Christ because he received "spirit and life" from them. Though not a sacramentally baptized Christian, in practice he followed Jesus' main teachings in an extraordinary way, and finally gave

his life for the sake of "righteousness" (Matt 5:10). Most of the 7 other Beatitudes declared by Jesus are also applicable in the Mahatma's personal life.

Here is his written testimony:
According to the book Gandhi the Man, authored by Mrs. Millie Polak (she and her husband were part of Gandhi's household in South Africa), Mr. Gandhi

> "frequently quoted the sayings and teachings of Jesus. The lesson of the 'Sermon on the Mount' seemed to be constantly in his mind, and was a source of guidance and inspiration to him. There was a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ that adorned the wall over his desk. There was no picture of the Buddha or of Krishna in the office, and only three other pictures were to be seen on the walls (pictures of famous social reformers of the time). But in the center of his office room upon the wall was the face of Christ."

Gandhi himself wrote a very revealing article about ***"Jesus: the man who belongs to the whole world."*** In it he wrote:

> *"Although a great part of my life has been devoted to the study of religion and to discussion with religious leaders of all faiths, I know that I cannot avoid writing about the figure of Jesus and trying to explain what significance and meaning he has had for me… I believe that Jesus himself, if he lived among men today, would bless the lives of many who perhaps had never heard his name, if they live in accordance with the virtues that his life so imperishably illustrated, the virtues of unselfishness and loving kindness toward one's fellow men. It is this, I think, that above all was important to him, just as it is written in the great book of Christianity – "Not he who cries out Lord, Lord, but he who does his will."*
>
> *"What, then, has Jesus meant to me? To me he is a great world teacher. To his followers, he was and is the only-begotten Son of God. Whether or not I accept this, does he affect my life the less? Is all the grandeur of his teaching thus automatically barred from me? I cannot believe so. The adjective "begotten" has a meaning for me that I like to think is deeper and possibly grander than its literal one. To my mind it implies spiritual birth. My interpretation, in other words, is that in his own life Jesus stood nearest to God. And it is in this sense that I look upon him as the Son of God…"*
>
> *"I refuse to believe that there were any who did not profit by his example and by his atoning for their sins, whether or not they consciously realized it. The lives of all were to some degree, great or small, changed and benefited by his presence, his actions, and the words of his voice… I interpret the miracles of Jesus not in a literal sense, which seems to me unimportant, but as the dramatic and unforgettable expression of this impulse, as the most vivid lesson possible to impart – not to just pass by the sick and suffering, not to judge those who, in the world's eyes, have sinned, but to forgive them and thus help them to enter a new and better life… because there was such a figure as that of Jesus, I am hopeful and confident of the future.* ***And it is because his life has this significance and meaning for me that I do not regard him as belonging to Christianity alone, but rather to the whole world, to all its peoples, no matter under what name they worship"*** (The Modern Review, October 1941).

The Spirit-inspired documents of the Second Vatican Council can help us today to see Gandhi as a Spirit-filled disciple of Jesus, for whom Jesus' words became "spirit and life:"

> *"All of this (Jesus' Paschal Mystery) applies not to Christians only but to all men and women of goodwill in whose hearts 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" (Gaudium et Spes, n.22).*

Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have all spoken highly of Gandhmesi as aPopes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have all spoken highly of Gandhi as a true man of God (for lack of space we cannot provide more texts here).

> The Rosary is known to all, even PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS, as part of the consoling mystery of divine help in times of suffering. Billions of human beings are being helped to transit from Truth to Prayer to Victory! May all the Saints in heaven pray for this to happen more and more, especially in our own Country. ***Satyameva jayate!*** Alleluia!

Dr. Fr. Fio Mascarenhas s.j.

Faithful unto Freedom

The Courageous story of the Maccabees



What happens when faith is attacked and people are forced to choose between loyalty to God and surrender to the pressures around them? This was the painful question faced by the Jewish people nearly two centuries before the birth of Jesus. In that dark period emerged a remarkable family of faith and courage: **Mattathias and his sons: Judas Maccabeus, Jonathan and Simon**. Their story, told mainly in the Books of 1 and 2 Maccabees, is a powerful witness to the truth that faith sometimes demands courage, sacrifice and perseverance.

Names Speak of Faith and Courage

The name Mattathias comes from the Hebrew Mattityahu, meaning "**Gift of the Lord.**" His son **Judas** bears the name connected with Judah, meaning "praise." Judas became known as "**Maccabeus,**" probably meaning "**the Hammer,**" reflecting his strength and determination in battle.

Jonathan means "**The Lord has given,**" while **Simon** means "**he has heard.**" Together, these names remind us of a

family deeply rooted in the God of Israel, a God who gives, hears and strengthens His people.

A Time When Faith Was Under Attack

The Maccabees lived during the second century before Christ. After the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Jewish people came under Greek influence. Eventually, **King Antiochus IV Epiphanes** attempted to suppress the Jewish religion. Jewish worship and customs were forbidden, and many people were pressured to abandon the Law of God.

The Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated, and faithful Jews were persecuted. It was a time of great religious crisis. The question was simple but costly: **Would God's people remain faithful, or would they compromise their faith for safety and comfort?**

Mattathias: The Courage to Say No



Mattathias was a priest living in Modein. When he was ordered to offer sacrifice according to pagan practices, he refused. His response became a rallying cry for faithful Jews: **"Let everyone who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!"** (1 Maccabees 2:27).

Mattathias understood that faith cannot simply be kept privately in one's heart while publicly denying God. He and his sons fled to the hills and began a resistance movement. Before his death, Mattathias encouraged his sons to remain faithful to the covenant and to remember the great heroes of Israel's history (1 Maccabees 2:49–70).

His mission was clear: to preserve the faith of God's people.

Judas Maccabeus: The Hammer of Faith

After Mattathias died, leadership passed to his son **Judas Maccabeus**. Judas became the great military and religious leader of the Jewish resistance. Although his army was often smaller and weaker than its enemies, Judas placed his confidence not merely in military strength but in God.

He reminded his followers: **"It is easy for many to be hemmed in by a few; in the sight of Heaven there is no difference between saving by many or by few"** (1 Maccabees 3:18).

Judas won important victories and eventually recaptured Jerusalem. One of his greatest achievements was the purification and rededication of the Temple (1 Maccabees 4:36–59). This event is remembered in the Jewish Feast of Dedication, or **Hanukkah**, mentioned in John 10:22.

Judas also gives Christians an important biblical witness to prayer for the dead. After a battle, he arranged sacrifices for fallen soldiers, believing that prayer could help those who had died (2 Maccabees 12:43–46). The Catholic Church sees this as a crucial biblical foundation of praying for the dead.

Jonathan and Simon: Continuing the Mission

After Judas died in battle, his brother **Jonathan** continued the struggle. He proved himself to be a courageous leader, diplomat and high priest. Through wisdom and perseverance, Jonathan helped strengthen the Jewish people and restore their political and religious life.

Later, Simon, the last surviving brother, continued the work. Under his leadership, the Jewish people experienced a period of greater peace and independence. The people recognised his faithful service and appointed him as their leader and high priest (1 Maccabees 14:41).

Each brother served differently, but all shared the same mission: **to protect the covenant, preserve the faith and restore the freedom of God's people.**

Their Place in God's Plan

The Maccabees stand at a crucial point in salvation history. Their courage helped preserve Jewish faith, worship and identity during a period of intense persecution. By defending the Temple and the Law, they helped prepare the religious world into which Jesus would later be born.

Their story also reminds Christians that religious freedom is precious. Faith must never become something we practise only when it is convenient or socially acceptable.

What the Maccabees Teach Us Today

The Maccabees speak powerfully to Christians today. We may not face the same persecution, but we often experience pressure to compromise our beliefs, values and moral convictions. It can be tempting to remain silent when honesty, justice, family values or faith are challenged.

Mattathias teaches us the courage to **say no to what is wrong**. Judas teaches us to **trust God when we feel weak**. Jonathan teaches us the value of **wisdom and perseverance**, while Simon shows us how faithful leadership can bring stability and peace.

The Maccabees remind us that true freedom is not simply the ability to do whatever we want. **True freedom is the courage to live according to God's truth**. Their lives challenge every Christian to ask: When my faith is tested, will I compromise, or will I remain faithful?

Their answer still echoes through history: **Remain faithful to God, trust Him in every struggle, and never be afraid to stand for what is right.**

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

Fr. Trevor D'Souza o.f.m.

The Prayer that teaches us to pause: One Bead at a Time



There is something almost wonderfully countercultural about the Rosary. It asks us to do something the world rarely asks of us anymore, to slow down. One bead. One prayer. One mystery. Then another.

No notifications. No deadlines. No need to have the right words. Just the quiet rhythm of the Hail Mary, repeated until the mind settles, the heart catches up and, perhaps without us even realising it, we begin to pray not merely with our lips, but with our lives.

October arrives each year carrying the gentle face of Our Lady of the Rosary. For generations, Catholics have turned to her with the same simple prayer. But perhaps the reason the Rosary has survived generations is precisely because it is so simple. We do not need a perfect prayer life to pray it. We do not need theological expertise, neither do we need to know exactly what to say. Sometimes, all we need is a handful of beads and a heart that says, "I don't know what else to do, so I am here."

A prayer for the moments we cannot fix

Most of us learn early that there are things we can solve. We study hard. We work harder. We make phone calls. We seek advice. We go to the doctor. We apologise. We try again.

And then there are things we simply cannot fix. A loved one who is unwell. A neighbour who has stopped speaking to us. A marriage going through a difficult season. A son or daughter living thousands of miles away. A grief that refuses to leave. A decision whose answer we cannot see. A future that feels frighteningly uncertain. It is often in these spaces that the Rosary finds us.

We begin with a prayer, perhaps distracted and unconvinced. We move through the beads. Our thoughts wander. We remember something we forgot to do. We worry about tomorrow. We return to the prayer. And then we begin again. There is something deeply human about that. The Rosary does not demand that we arrive before God with a perfectly composed mind. It allows us to come exactly as we are.

Mary knew what it meant to carry uncertainty

Perhaps this is why Mary matters so deeply in the Rosary. We sometimes encounter Mary only through beautiful statues, paintings and carefully arranged church altars. Yet the woman behind those images lived a life that was anything but predictable. She was asked to trust without being given the whole picture. She carried a promise at such a tender age, even before she understood its consequences. She watched her Son grow, suffer and die. She knew the joy of unexpected beginnings as well as the anguish of a mother who could not simply make suffering disappear.

Mary's yes was not just a yes to an easy life. Rather it was a yes to trusting God's plan one step at a time. And perhaps that is what the Rosary teaches us too. We do not always receive the entire map. Life seems uncertain, and in this uncertainty, sometimes we simply move to the next bead, on the rosary.

The mysteries are not just prayers to be completed

It is easy to turn the Rosary into a counting exercise. Five decades. Fifty Hail Marys. Glory be to The Father, The Son and Holy Spirit… and done. The Rosary, however, was never meant to be merely about finishing prayers. It is about remembering and cherishing the memory.

The Joyful Mysteries take us into the wonder and joy of new beginnings, especially the birth of Christ. The Sorrowful Mysteries walks us through the suffering, betrayal, abandonment, pain and the Cross. The Glorious Mysteries remind us that suffering is not the final word. And the Luminous Mysteries invite us to contemplate Christ's public life and the light of His ministry.

In other words, the Rosary quietly walks us through the human experiences of Joy. Uncertainty. Love. Suffering. Loss. Crisis. Hope. Resurrection.

Perhaps that is why different generations and people with varied mindsets can find themselves relating to the same beads. Someone grieving may find comfort in its repetition. Someone who has almost forgotten how to pray may begin again with a single decade. The words remain the same. The story we bring to them will never be the same.

The Rosary in a world that never stops talking

We live in an age of constant noise. Our phones wake us up. Messages follow us through the day. News arrives before we have even had our morning coffee. We scroll while waiting, eat while watching

Tancia Pires

And perhaps that is another reason the Rosary remains relevant. It gives us a structured way to enter silence without demanding that silence be empty.

The repetition of the Hail Mary can become an anchor. While the world may still be noisy outside. But somewhere within us, there is a little more stillness. The Rosary does not necessarily change the circumstances we are praying about. Sometimes, it changes the person who is praying. One bead at a time.

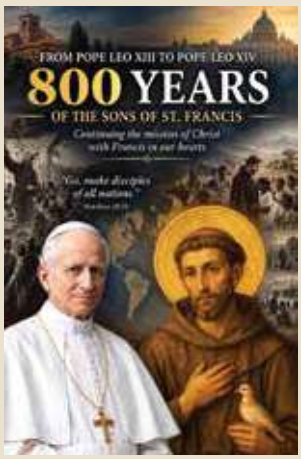
And perhaps that is enough

We often imagine that a strong faith must look extraordinary. But Christianity has always been full of ordinary things carrying extraordinary meaning: bread, wine, water, oil, a wooden cross and beads held between human fingers.

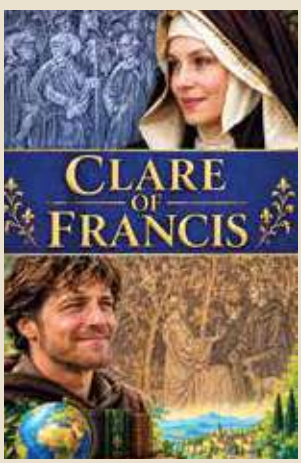
The Rosary does not ask us to become extraordinary before we pray. It simply asks us to begin. So, this October, perhaps we can look at Our Lady of the Rosary a little differently. Not merely as the beautiful figure on the cover of a magazine. Not merely as the patroness of a devotion we have known since childhood. But as the Mother who points us, time and again, towards Christ. And perhaps when life becomes too loud, too uncertain or too heavy, we can return to what generations before us already knew. Take the Rosary. Hold the first bead. Begin.We may not know how everything will unfold. We may not have answers to every prayer. We may not be able to change what lies ahead. But we can take the next bead. And then the next. One prayer, one mystery, one day at a time.



Pope Leo XIV's Franciscan Jubilee Year: St. Francis of Assisi







St. Francis of Assisi: Pope Leo XIV's Proclamation of the Franciscan Jubilee Year and the Life and Spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi – Feast Day, October, 4th.

Pope Leo XIV Proclaimed a special Franciscan Jubilee Year from January 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027, marking the 800th Anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi. The celebration invites the universal Church to embrace spiritual renewal, simplicity and a deep commitment to peace.

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has arranged that, from the 10th January, 2026 to the 10th January, 2027, the Year of St. Francis will be celebrated, during which all the Christian faithful are invited to follow the example of the Saint of Assisi, becoming models of holiness of life and constant witnesses of peace. The Apostolic Penitentiary grants the plenary indulgence under the usual conditions to those who participate devoutly in this extraordinary jubilee, which represents an ideal continuation of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025.

This Jubilee Year is addressed especially to members of the Franciscan Families of the First, Second and Third Regular and Secular Orders, as well as to Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life and Associations that observe the Rule of St. Francis or are inspired by its spirituality. However, **the grace of this special year is also extended to all the faithful** without distinction who, with their spirits removed from sin, visit in the form of a pilgrimage any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis in any part of the world. **The elderly, the sick and those who for serious reasons cannot leave home, will also be able to obtain the plenary indulgence by spiritually joining the Jubilee celebrations and offering their prayers, pains or sufferings to God.**

In this time of celebration that culminates eight hundred years of Franciscan memory, we cordially invite all the faithful to take an active part in this exceptional Jubilee. May the shining example of St. Francis, who knew how to make himself poor and humble in order to be true (other Christ) on earth, inspire our hearts to live with authentic Christian charity towards our neighbor and with sincere longings for concord and peace among peoples. Following in the footsteps of the Poverello (poor, humble little man) of Assisi, let us transform the hope that made us pilgrims during the Holy Year into fervor and zeal of effective charity. **May this Year of St Francis be for each one of us a providential occasion for sanctification and evangelical witness in the contemporary** world, for the glory of God and the good of the whole Church.

Conditions for Receiving the Indulgence

(for oneself or for the deceased)

- **Sacramental Confession** to be in God's grace (in the eight days before or after);
- Participation in Mass and **Eucharistic Communion**;
- To visit in the form of a pilgrimage any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis anywhere in the world, where one renews one's profession of faith, through the recitation of the **Creed** and reaffirm Christian identity;
- The recitation of the **Lord's Prayer**, to reaffirm the dignity of children of God, received in Baptism;
- To pray for the intentions of the **Holy Father**, to reaffirm belonging to the Church, whose foundation and visible center of unity is the Roman Pontiff.

Franciscan Spirituality: God Is Love

Pius XII described Franciscan spirituality this way: "There is, then, a Franciscan doctrine in accordance with which God is holy, is great, and above all, is good, indeed the supreme Good. For in this doctrine, God is love. He lives by love, creates for love, becomes flesh and redeems, that is, he saves and makes holy, for love. There is also a Franciscan way of contemplating Jesus…in his human love."

The great emphasis, then, is on the fact that God is love. Every Christian believes this, of course, but some of us choose to emphasize it as Francis did. To live the Gospel according to the spirit of Francis means participating

- in communion with Christ poor and crucified,
- in the love of God,
- in brother/sisterhood with all people and all of creation,
- in the life and mission of the Church,
- in continual conversion,
- in a life of prayer—liturgical, personal, communal,
- as instruments of peace.

Deeper Spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi

The spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi centers on revolutionary Gospel living, radical humility, deep communion with creation, an intense, personal devotion to the humanity and suffering of Jesus Christ.

Core Pillars of Franciscan Spirituality

- Radical Humility and Poverty: Francis called poverty his "bride" and stripped himself of all worldly goods to depend

entirely on divine providence. He saw absolute littleness as the ultimate path to grace and freedom from ego.

- Universal Fraternity and Creation: He viewed all created things—calling the sun brother and the moon sister in his Canticle of the Creatures—as reflections of God's supreme beauty and goodness.
- Embracing the Marginalized: His transformative moment came when he kissed a leper, recognizing the suffering face of Christ in the outcast and the sick rather than serving the poor from a distance.
- Devotion to the Passion: Francis centered his prayer life on the human Jesus, leading to his profound mystical union with Christ culminating in receiving the stigmata (the wounds of Christ) on Mount La Verna.
- Constant Contemplative Prayer: He frequently sought physical solitude and silence in nature or remote hermitages to quiet his heart and maintain unbroken communion with God.

The Essence of St. Francis' Spirituality

The Three Divine Encounters that turned Francis heavenward

The essence of Franciscan spirituality is anchored in three profound encounters that shaped Francis' life, vision and conversion:

1. His embracing the Leper made him overcome self in utter humility.
2. His 'Call' at the San Damiano Cross: Rebuild my Church, which was profound and radical transformation of his life, detachment from worldly attachments and clinging to the Cross of Christ and his Love.
3. His Stigmata at La Verna: This was complete Mystical Union with Jesus.

1. Embracing the Leper

The embracing of the leper by Saint Francis of Assisi was a defining turning point in his spiritual conversion. Though he initially felt intense fear and disgust toward people with leprosy, Francis dismounted his horse, kissed, and embraced a leper on the road, recognizing the face of Jesus Christ in the outcast and transforming his interior life.

2. Rebuild My Church

In 1205, St. Francis of Assisi prayed before the Byzantine crucifix at the run-down chapel of San Damiano and heard a voice from the cross tell him three times: "Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin."

The Spiritual Meaning

- **Broader mission:** Francis soon realized God wanted him to renew the entire global Church.
- **Life of poverty:** He chose radical poverty and humility to match the Gospel.
- **Spiritual renewal:** His simple way of life inspired thousands of followers to live like Christ and reform the faith from within.
- **Human hearts:** Francis realized that the true "house" of God is not made of brick and mortar, but of human souls.
- **The marginalized:** He began rebuilding the Church by serving the forgotten—preaching to the poor and physically embracing lepers, whom society cast out.

Radical Evangelical Poverty

- **Rejecting materialism:** The institutional Church had become wealthy and elite. Francis chose Lady Poverty, owning absolutely nothing to show that God alone is enough. [1, 2]
- **Literal Gospel living:** He took the words of Christ literally—traveling without money, extra shoes, or a staff—which served as a silent, powerful critique of clerical greed.

3. His Stigmata

Saint Francis of Assisi is the first historically recorded person to receive the stigmata—the miraculous bodily wounds matching the crucifixion marks of Jesus Christ (hands, feet, and side). He received them on September 17, 1224, during a prayer retreat on Mount La Verna after a vision of a six-winged seraph (six-winged seraph-angels – they stand closest to God's throne as guardians and perpetual worshippers).

According to historical and religious accounts, the marks appeared on his body exactly where Jesus was wounded during the crucifixion:

- Two wounds on his hands: Punctures through the palms.
- Two wounds on his feet: Punctures through the tops of his feet.
- One wound on his side: A deep gash on his right flank, mimicking the lance thrust.

Unlike wounds from an injury, these marks were described as having fleshy, dark, nail-like protrusions that could not be removed or healed. They bled frequently and caused Francis intense physical pain until his death two years later.

Conclusion:

St. Francis of Assisi was declared the Patron Saint of Ecology in 1979, by St. Pope John Paul II. He is honored for his profound love for nature, animals, and all creation, famously viewing the natural world as a shared family and calling elements of nature by familial names like: "Brother Fire," "Sister Water" and "Brother Sun," "Sister Moon," and "Mother Earth" in his renowned prayer. The Canticle of the Creatures, reflects a deep spiritual reverence for the natural world.

Francis and Clare of Assisi shared a profound spiritual partnership (Twin Lovers), rooted in divine love rather than a romantic relationship, transforming 13th-century European Christianity. Their bond as a "mystical romance," historians and theologians emphasize that, their connection was a sublime friendship of souls—a shared devotion to Christ crucified. **"When Francis felt most alone, he would turn to Clare for clarity, wisdom, and a love stripped of sentimentality." Their mutual affection transcended earthly eros, channeling intense spiritual passion (agape) into building Spiritual Orders of Monks/Monastic Nuns or Sisters, focused on humility, penance, and care for the marginalized.**

The Catholic Church holds St. Francis as the greatest Saints of the Catholic Church, an (alter Christus) in Latin, 'another Christ,' because he lived a life closest to Jesus. His Order of Friars soon became one of the biggest 'Fraternities'/Groups of Friars and Lay People, of Roman Catholicism.

St. Francis of Assisi' Feast is celebrated on October, 4th.

Leon Bent



October Musings: Mental Health, the Girl Child and the United Nations

October is important to us for many reasons, particularly because it brings three significant observances: World Mental Health Day on 10 October, the International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October, and United Nations Day on 24 October. Each of these occasions has a significance that goes far beyond the attention we give them today.

World Mental Health Day

The scene is scary if we look at the data.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, nearly 15 per cent of Indian adults require active intervention for one or more mental-health problems, based on India's National Mental Health Survey 2015–16. Approximately one in 20 Indians was estimated to experience depression. India's age-standardised suicide rate has been estimated at 21.1 per 100,000 population. WHO has also estimated that mental-health conditions could result in an economic loss of approximately US$1.03 trillion in India between 2012 and 2030.

But statistics tell only part of the story.

Look at the crisis within a family when there is a person with a serious mental-health condition. First comes the shock, followed by ignorance and stigma. And when the affected person belongs to an economically or socially vulnerable community, the agony can be indescribable.

I still recall the face of a girl student in my class who would sleep most of the time. When I asked her about it, she confessed that she had a mentally ill sister and due to her illness she found it difficult to rest and sleep through the night.

Education, Awareness and Action

The mental-health situation calls for a great deal of education, awareness and conscious action.

Let me share a story. Many years ago, I was living in Trivandrum and used to visit a fishing village, Poovar, some 30 kilometres away from the city. One weekend, when I planned to visit the village, I happened to notice that it was 10 October and that there was an exhibition on mental health at the Town Hall. I spent an hour looking around.

What was particularly educative for me was the information about the symptoms of mental illness and the ways in which even ordinary men and women could help those affected.

After the exhibition, I took a bus and reached Poovar. As I was walking towards the centre I was visiting, a young woman whom I knew very well saw me but walked away without even greeting me. I found it strange, but ignored it and walked on.

To my surprise, I heard her call me from behind. I turned back. There was panic in her eyes, and she wanted to talk urgently.

I sat down with her. Her story was deeply disturbing. She was seeing visions of her sister, who had died earlier, and every night her sister appeared to her, inviting her to join her.

Fresh from the exhibition, I recognised the symptoms and knew what to do. Then and there, I helped her get an appointment with a psychiatrist.

It was a happy story. She received treatment and soon returned to normal life.

Mental health calls for education, awareness and proactive behaviour from all of us.



The Girl Child

Girl children are among the most beautiful creations of nature and, for many of us, of God. Yet, sadly, they remain among the most vulnerable and abused people on earth.

Back to the data. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), thousands of cases of crimes against children are reported every year, with girls

M. K. George

a six-year-old girl. Given the limitations of reporting and policing systems, what we know may only be the tip of the iceberg.

Would the celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October wake us up to greater awareness and action?

United Nations Day

If we want to understand the importance of United Nations Day, we should go back to the dreams that gave birth to the United Nations.

The United Nations was born from dreams of peace, cooperation and collective security after the devastation of the Second World War. Leaders and people across the world hoped to create an international organisation that could prevent future wars, protect human rights and promote equality among nations. The vision was inspired by the belief that countries could resolve disputes through dialogue rather than violence.

Founded in 1945, the United Nations represented a shared dream of building a safer and more peaceful world in which nations could work together for the common good.

But today, that dream appears deeply challenged. Wars, humanitarian crises, terrorism, displacement and growing geopolitical rivalries continue to threaten international peace. The UN often struggles to act decisively when powerful countries disagree, particularly in the Security Council, where the veto can prevent collective action. Climate change, poverty and inequality further test global cooperation.

Yet the United Nations remains an important platform for dialogue and diplomacy. The dream is challenged, but it is not lost. Restoring faith in it requires stronger cooperation and a renewed commitment to the ideals that gave birth to it.

The Unfinished Dream

October is a month of unfinished dreams: a humanity that takes care of mental health and those living with mental illness; a humanity that cares for the girl child, protects her and enables her to flourish; and a humanity that continues to nurture the dream of unity, peace and security through collective action, dialogue, diplomacy, sustainable development, human dignity and Good Health for all.

Pope Leo reminds us, "Acknowledging the dignity of each human person can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity."

Perhaps that is the dream we need to rediscover in this month of October!





Dusshera



Dusshera

Like most festivals, Dusshera too symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. Festivities last for 10 days and nights, the first nine nights called 'Navaratri', are dedicated to the worship of different aspects of goddesses Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati. Here is a quick peek at how it is celebrated interstate. This article has been formulated by information supplied by my friends Mrs. Helena Ganguly and Ms. Seema Anand both ex-teachers of Canossa High School, Mahim, and a wee bit from Wikipedia.

The appearance of the Kash and Shiuli flowers (wild Sugarcane and Night Jasmine) in Sharad Ritu (autumn season), renders a feeling of expectancy in the air. Grains have been harvested, homes are now full of food, leaving everyone eagerly looking forward to a time of festivities and celebrations. The first of these is Durga Pujo, which begins on the 6th day, after the new moon in September / October.

Dusshera is celebrated by bringing home the mother goddess along with her children- Ganesh, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kartik and their personal carriers. Ma Durga astride a majestic lion gifted to her by her father, with the presence of her husband Shiva above her head, Ganesh on a mouse, Saraswati on a swan, Lakshmi on a white owl, Kartik on a peacock.

The background to the festival lies in the fact that, humans on earth were being exploited by the Asuras (demons), who lived in the dense forests. They made life difficult for the humans by stealing their cattle and feeding on the humans themselves. In desperation, the humans prayed to the gods, who answered their prayers. Ma Durga appeared with 10

Ninette D'Souza

armaments (divine sacred symbols) in her 10 hands, each gifted to her by a different deity, to help her defeat the demon king and restore cosmic order.

Ma Durga has 2 avatars (i) Mohisasura Mordhini (as she is called by Bengalis) because she killed the buffalo demon. The battle took place on the Chamundi hills in Mysuru, during the new moon night. Her temple and the demon's huge statue are found on the hill. The Chamundeshwari temple where she resides, was built by the royal family of Mysuru. (ii) Ma Duga is her serene avatar as she rests peacefully, amidst her faithful human followers, who truly love her. This is seen in the way she is celebrated and served new dishes, during each visit. New clothes, jewelry and fresh flowers are offered each day. At first only the zamindars (rich folk) had the capacity to celebrate her. Over time it changed to 'Sarbojonin' (for all).

On the 8th day, 'Sandhi Pujo' is held to celebrate the puja of Shri Ram to goddess Durga. Before he left for Srilanka, to kill Ravana and bring back his wife Sita, Ram prayed to Ma Durga, to bless him with her powers, so that he would win the war. He offered her 108 blue lotuses during the puja, but 1 was found missing. So Ram willing offered his own eye to complete the offering. Ma Durga stopped him and promised her blessings nonetheless.

When exactly did this festival come into existence? There are no exact dates, but the battle of Chamundi is recorded in the Maha Chandi – a book of palm leaves. During the festival, the entire story is recounted with chants of shlokas and songs, by the priests, on the new moon night, at around 4 a.m.

Bengalis celebrate the festival with great happiness and brotherhood. Children and adults wear new clothes, gorge on sumptuous food, visit friends and relatives. On the 10th day married ladies first bid farewell to Ma Durga, with sweets, betel leaves and vermillion (sindoor) which they smear exuberantly on one another's foreheads, cheeks and on the iron bangle worn on their left hands. This is called Sindoor Utsav.

In North India all 10 days are publicly dominated by the 'Ramlila'. Once the rains are over, harvest is cut and stored, everyone begins preparation for the annual; devotional and enthusiastic; vivid enactments of episodes, from the Ramayana, culminating with the burning of Ravana's effigies and celebrating the triumph of Rama. Women do not take part in the traditional Ramlila. Sita's role and those of other women, are usually played by young boys who dress up in ghagras or saris and use makeup. Many of them enjoy playing the role of the wicked rakshasi Shurpanakha, because they get to paint their faces into a hideous; frightening mask.

In Tamil Nadu every home sets up a 'Kolu' a stepped decorated platform, filled with toys and clay figurines representing gods, goddesses and their carriers. Also included in the Kolu is a 'Kalasam' (a silver, copper or clay vessel with a coconut in it representing the mother goddess). Every evening, women visit each other's homes to sing and dance in front of the Kolu. On the 9th day, professional implements such as books, ploughs, saws etc. are laid in the Kolu, while the Saraswati or Ayuda Puja is performed. Everyone refrains from work on this day. On the 10th day which is Vijayadasami, people rededicate themselves to their professions. This is also the day of Vidyaramba (beginning of a child's formal learning).

In Karnataka, Dusshera is the most important festival of the year. Devotees gather in thousands, at the grand Chamundeshwari Temple. Ma Durga (Chamundeshwari) is the presiding deity of Mysuru city. The royal palace is decorated with thousands of lights. The Raja takes out a procession with the deity riding on an elephant and him following her. The city freshly painted and decorated looks very colourful, with the temporary bazaars giving it a festive look.

In adjacent Andhra Pradesh where Dusshera is locally known as Dasara or Vijayadashami, temple festivities, showcasing of traditional arts and prayers for livelihood are the norm. The famous Kanaka Durga temple in Vijayawada, hosts grand Dasara Navaratrulu celebrations. The presiding deity is adorned in different Alankaram (avatars) over 10 days, ending with the Theppotsavam (float festival) on the Krishna river. Local shrines decorated with lights and flowers, organize special pujas and carry out processions for regional deities. While the melas (fairs) offer traditional cuisine, toyshops and local commerce, temples and village squares encourage spending time in a meaningful way, by having performances like the Burrakatha (Burra = tambura the musical instrument, katha = oral story) and Harikatha (Hari = Lord Vishnu). These folk performances also known as Katha Kaalakshepa, help to know more of the epics. As in the adjoining states, people here also set up Bommala Koluvu (display of dolls) in their homes.

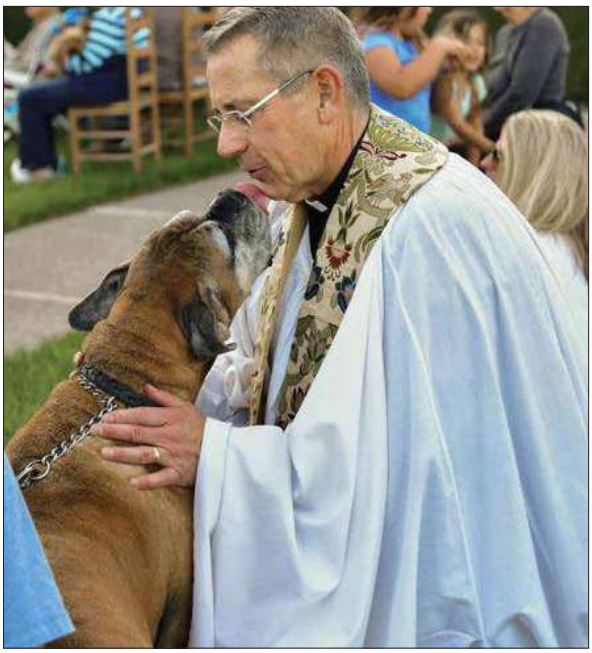
In Kerala on the other hand, Dusshera is a minor festival. Hindu families quietly celebrate Ayuda Puja and Vijayadasami in their homes.

In our state of Maharashtra, celebration of Dusshera involves 2 main rituals besides all of the above. The first is 'Simollanghan'. In this people cross the village/town border to mark the triumph of good over evil. The second is 'Exchanging Apta leaves' (bidi leaves). This action which signifies an exchange of gold, is meant to bring in good luck and prosperity, rooted as it is in the legend of Kautsa and king Kubera. Maharashtrians draw the Saraswati Yantra, a geometric diagram used to invoke the divine energy of goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge, and use it while performing the Ayuda/Shastra puja to invite success and divine blessings. The celebration of the festival is incomplete without the traditional festive food 'Puran Poli' and the hanging of 'torans' at the entrance to the home and on personal vehicles.

Truly India can boast of unity in diversity.

Our Amazing Companions!





Animals make our world colourful, lively, and beautiful. From playful puppies and curious cats to singing birds and fluttering butterflies, every creature has a special place in nature. Whether they live in forests, oceans, farms, or our homes, animals are an important part of our world. They bring us joy, teach us valuable lessons, and help keep nature in balance.

Animals play an important role in keeping our planet healthy. Honeybees and butterflies pollinate flowers and help many plants produce fruits and seeds. Birds and other animals spread seeds from one place to another, allowing new plants to grow. Earthworms help improve the soil, while predators such as tigers and eagles help control animal populations. In this way, every creature—big or small—has a role to play in nature.

Animals also help us benefit in many different ways. For thousands of years, people have depended on animals for food, farming, transport, protection, and companionship.

On farms, cows, buffaloes, and other animals may provide milk or help with farm work. Dogs can guard homes, farms, and other places. Specially trained guide dogs assist people who are visually impaired, helping them move around more safely and independently. Rescue dogs can also search for people after earthquakes, floods, and disasters.

Animals can provide comfort and companionship as well. Pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits, and birds can become loving members of a family. Spending time with animals can make people feel happy and less lonely. Therapy animals are specially trained to comfort and support people in hospitals, schools, care homes, and other settings. Horses, for example, are sometimes included in programmes that help people develop a sense of confidence, improve communication skills and build physical abilities.

Animals can teach us important values, too. Dogs can show us loyalty, elephants demonstrate strong family bonds, and many animals remind us of the importance of cooperation and care. By observing animals, we can learn more about patience, teamwork, communication, and survival.

Most importantly, animals remind us that humans are not the only living beings who deserve a safe and healthy world.

As children, we can be friends to animals by treating them with kindness and respect. We should never hurt, tease, chase, or unnecessarily disturb animals. We should not throw stones at birds, pull an animal's tail, or disturb nests and eggs. Wild animals should be admired from a safe distance because they need space to live naturally.

There are many simple ways we can help animals. We can provide clean

Jubel D'Cruz



water for birds and other animals, especially during hot weather. We can keep our surroundings clean and avoid throwing plastic or other waste where animals may eat it. We can plant trees, flowers, and other plants that provide food and shelter for insects and birds. We can also help protect forests, rivers, oceans, and other habitats where wild animals live. If we see an injured or endangered animal, we should seek help from responsible adults or trained animal-care organisations rather than trying to avoid or attempt to handle it ourselves.

October 4 is celebrated as World Animal Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about animal welfare and encouraging people to treat animals with kindness and compassion. The day is associated with Saint Francis of Assisi, who is remembered for his love and respect for every animal and all God'd living creatures.

Every animal deserves to be treated with kindness and protected from unnecessary cruelty and suffering. We may not be able to help every animal in the world, but our small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference. When we protect animals, we also help protect nature and our shared home—the Earth.

The official World Animal Day theme for 2026 is "See the World Through Their Eyes." The theme encourages us to look beyond a human-centred view of the world and think about animals' needs, feelings, habitats, and well-being. It reminds us to consider how our actions affect the animals with whom we share our planet.

A quotation widely attributed to Mahatma Gandhi says, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Although this quotation is commonly associated with Gandhi, its exact source has been disputed by researchers. Nevertheless, its message reminds us of the importance of compassion and responsible treatment of animals.

Let us learn to see the world through the eyes of animals and understand that they, too, are part of our shared planet. By showing kindness, protecting habitats, and caring for the creatures around us, we can help make the Earth a safer, healthier, and happier home for everyone.

(Poem can be published as a box-item)

Be Kind to Animals

Be kind to every furry friend,
They love us till the very end.
Feed them, help them, show you care,
Treat them kindly everywhere.
Birds that sing up in the sky,
Butterflies that flutter by,
Puppies, kittens, cows, and deer,
All deserve our love sincere.
Never hurt or make them cry,
Let them live and roam nearby.
A gentle heart and helping hand
Can make this world a kinder land.
So let's promise every day,
To care for them in every way.
Kindness shines for all to see—
Happy animals, happy me!



Christine DSylva

Most Beautiful Rainbows in the world



Rainbows are formed when sunlight enters falling water drops. The water bends and splits the light into 7 colours- Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red. The first letters spell VIBGYOR

The world's most beautiful rainbows happen in places with lots of water spray and bright sunlight. These perfect conditions create stunning contrast displays.

Victoria Falls in Zambia has some of the most beautiful rainbows. Millions of gallons of water drop into the gorge creating a massive mist cloud. When the sun shines it makes a giant glowing rainbow arc.

Hawai is the rainbow capital of the world. The rainbows here are perfectly shaped and double and even triple rainbows are seen every week.

Skogafoss Waterfall in Iceland is massive. On any sunny day the falling water that makes a very thick mist creates a bright clear rainbow that stretches into a full arc across the green valley.

In India the best place to see beautiful stunning rainbows is in Cherrapunj in Meghalaya. The famous Rainbow falls is near Nongriat a village in Meghalaya.



Kolaba Fort at Alibaugh Beach

This fort is an old fortified maritime base in Alibaug. It is situated in the sea at a distance of 1-2 km from the shores of Alibaug.

It is a popular tourist destination and a protected monument.

It was chosen by Shivaji to be fortified after the whole of the South Konkan became free. In 1662 Shivaji strengthened the fort to make it one of the chief naval stations.

On 17th November 1721, the British incensed at Angre, a Maratha Navy officer who used it as a main base to launch raids on British ships decided to join the Portuguese to fight. A Portuguese land force of about 6000 and three English ships under Commodore Mathews attempted to fight the Marathas. But they lost. They blamed the failure on "the cowardice of the Portuguese."

In 1842 the British sold the wooden structures in the fort by auction and used the stones for the construction of Alibaug's water works



Naturopathy: The Science of **Healing** by **Nature**

1. Instead of expensive commercial dry shampoos on no wash days, this dry shampoo is natural and quite effective. Either use plain corn starch or use arrow hoot powder. To avoid the white residue you may mix it with some cocoa powder. Rub it on your scalp in moderation and then brush out your hair after a minute. Your hair will lose its greasy look. This is a life saver when you lack time to wash your hair. Good old talcum powder especially baby powder also works.
2. If your joints feel sore, mix one tablespoon of honey with half tablespoon of cinnamon powder to soothe sore joints.
3. Oatmeal is a nutrient dense and fibre rich breakfast that stabilises blood sugar and provides sustained energy. The beta-glucan in oats helps reduce LDL (bad cholesterol) lowering the risk of heart disease. If you do not like to eat oats in its pure form, try having Muesli for breakfast. Various brands like Kellogs, Baggerys etc make tasty Muesli that has oats, fruit and nuts. It should be had with either milk or yogurt. You can top it with sliced fruit too.
4. If you are concerned about dental health try eating a small piece of cheese or cheese cube every day. It helps protect tooth enamel against cavities.



READER'S feedback

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Brain TEASERS

1. **WHY CAN'T A LEOPARD HIDE?**
2. **WHY DON'T EGGS TELL JOKES?**
3. **WHY DID THE PENCIL ALWAYS GET GOOD GRADES?**
4. **WHAT INVENTION LETS YOU LOOK RIGHT INTO A WALL?**

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Fr. Agnels' BLESSINGS

THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF VEN. FR. AGNEL, GIFTED WITH A PROPOSAL FOR MY SON
Julie D'Silva - Marine Lines

FOR A GOOD LIFE PARTNER, GOOD CAREER, GOOD JOB AND GOOD HEALTH
Sofia Francis – Thane

FOR 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY & SPECIAL INTENTIONS
Thresa Baptista

FOR THE GIFT OF A CHILD AND PEACE IN THE FAMILY
Gatting Koli - Mumbai

FOR THE GIFT OF A CHILD
Freddy Chafia – Mumbai

FOR THE GIFT OF A CHILD
Avina Linus Shrawnia

FOR THE GIFT OF TWIN GIRLS & THEIR GOOD HEALTH
Tresida Pereira, Goregaon

FOR SAFE PREGNANCY & DELIVERY
Marie Gracious

FOR GOOD HEALTH & PEACE IN THE FAMILY
Jyoti Lopes - Manikpur

FOR GOOD HEALTH & PEACE IN THE FAMILY
Sabina & Cyril Goves - Kalwa

FOR GOOD HEALTH & PEACE IN THE FAMILY
Richard Lopes - Vasai

GOOD HEALTH, PEACE & PROSPERITY
Nunes Cynthia, Vasai

FOR GOOD HEALTH & PEACE IN THE FAMILY
Nelsia Khan

FOR EMPLOYMENT ABROAD
Raymond Dabre, Virar

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCESSFUL OPERATION
David Tuscano – Vasai

THANKSGIVING FOR A SUCESSFUL HEART SURGERY
Aparna Dhanawade

FOR PEACE IN THE FAMILY, SPEEDY RECOVERY OF LEG INJURY, EXAMINATIONS & WELL-BEING
Mega D'Souza, Vasai

FOR A GOOD LIFE PARTNER, GOOD JOB & GOOD HEALTH
Vijay Cerejo, Canada

TO CLEAR C.A. EXAMS
Russel Rozario - Mumbai

FOR HEALING FROM ALCOHOLISM
Clifford Khavati - Arnala

FOR BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS
Syble Misquitta – Vasai

FOR BLESSINGS ON BUSINESS
Saloni Boat

FOR BLESSINGS ON BUSINESS
Ritesh Koli, Naigaon

FOR BLESSINGS ON CHILDREN AND GOOD HEALTH OF THE FAMILY
Nixon Gomes, Nalasopara

FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE
Keith Rodrigues, Virar

FOR A COURT CASE, LOST PROPERTY & GOLD. FOR GOOD BUSINESS & A GOOD PROPOSAL & BLESSINGS IN BUSINESS.
Priscilla Castelino – Shahapur

25TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF ALEX JOHN D'SOUZA
Napolina D'Souza

FOR ALL SOULS IN PURGATORY
Orazio Fernandes, Dombivali



There is no JOY GREATER than the THE JOY OF GIVING

Gulnar Kataki, Mumbai
I have made an online donation via cheque of Rs. 15,000/- towards the full sponsorship & for the welfare of orphans studying in Balbhavan.

Veera J. Ghadially, Mumbai
Sending a small gift of Rs.10,000/- via Cheque for the Balbhavan boys as a sponsorship for the Balbhavan boys. We pray that your desires in life be fulfilled.

Jessica Fernandes, Borivali
A monthly contribution of Rs.10000/- through UPI was sent towards the sponsorship of one child in the ashram.

Fransquinha Fernandes, Marol
My monthly contribution of an amount of Rs.2500/- via UPI given towards the well-being of two children under Fr. Agnel Ashram's care.

Harshad Patrick, Anand
I am pleased to donate an amount of Rs. 2000/- for various needs, requirements and care of a Balbhavan boy.

Agnelo Anand Joseph Olakkengil, Mulund
We are happy to donate an amount of Rs. 1250/- as our monthly sponsoship for a Balbhavan boy.

Angelina Lunis, Dahisar
An amount of Rs.1000/- donated as a thanksgiving for favors received and for the expenses in Balbhavan.

Grinal Nilesh Pereira, Vasai
I am donating an amount of Rs.1000/- via UPI as a Thanksgiving for the favors received and for the expenses in Balbhavan.

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY



Praveen M Srivastava	Mumbai	100000
Margaret Cardoz	Mumbai	15000
Jesu Dason	Mumbai	12000
Shilpa S Gonsalves	Vasai	12000
Madhuri Vijay D'souza	Kalyan	10000
Dicky Alphonso	Mumbai	10000
Dinaz H Singh	Telangana	9000
Hutoxi Zubin Bharucha	Palghar	7000
Pamela Britto	Pune	6200
Mary Varghese	Gujrat	6000
Warren J Fernandes	Mumbai	6000
Subramaniam R. Huf	Mumbai	5250
Rajendra K Parikh	Mumbai	5001
Lucia Mendonca	Mumbai	5000
Aldrin Pashana	Thane	5000
Allwyn D'souza	Palghar	5000
Selwyn Baptist George	Oman	5000
Franky Cardoz	Mumbai	5000
Cranetech Equipments	Mumbai	5000
Preeti Vyas	Mumbai	5000
Joseph A Dcunha	Mumbai	5000
Noretha Petar Chettiar	Mumbai	5000
Kavitha Ghoshal	Mumbai	5000
Veronica A Fernandes	Goa	5000
Sandeep Rodrigues	Palghar	5000
Falguni Solanki	Palghar	4300
Lynette Lillian Dcruz.	Mumbai	4000
Anita Pillay	Pune	4000
Agnelo A J Olakkengil	Mumbai	3250
Techno Products.	Chennai	3000
Rija Anna Francis	Kerela	3000
Kainaz Engineer	Mumbai	2501
Shahnaz H Engineer	Mumbai	2501
Vijay Kantilal Pijwala	Gujrat	2500
Rita Johnson	Kerela	2400
Hyacinth Kenny	Mumbai	2000
Attely Anto Kuttikadan.	Kalyan	2000
Burk D'couto	Kerela	2000
Penelope Correya	Kerela	2000
Vijay Arahna	Karnataka	2000
Agnes Naidu	Mumbai	2000
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Elvira Potla	Navi - Mumbai	2000
Akshay Sonawane	Kalyan	2000
Igit Fernandes	Mumbai	2000
Arokia V K G Nadar	Mumbai	2000
Tanaz Davar	Pune	1501
Gavin Peter Fonseca.	Mumbai	1500
Pranav Bhatt	Mumbai	1500
Jude D'souza	Bhayandar	1500
Dhonde R Dhabhane	Raigad	1400
Siju Thengil	Mumbai	1313
Rabia J Khan	Mumbai	1250
Monica D'souza	Pune	1200
Dorothy A P Singh	Karnataka	1200
Marian Fabian D'souza	Mumbai	1110
Kashmira K Daruwalla	Mumbai	1100
Sairus J. Rangoonwala	Mumbai	1100
Kimaya Subramaniam	Mumbai	1001
Mehul Prakash Soni	Mumbai	1001
Vivian Fernandes	Mumbai	1000
Jeena Pauly	Kerela	1000
Rockhenry A Chettiar	Mumbai	1000
Hiren Gala	Kalyan	1000
Abey E Thomas	Kerela	1000
Maryantony	Kerela	1000
Flemy Thekketh.	Kerela	1000
Lawrence S Noronha	Mumbai	1000
Vibha Solanki/ Himatlal	Gujrat	1000
Aruna Fernando	Tamil Nadu	1000
Rhea Anna Skariah	Palghar	1000
Jobi George	Kerela	1000
A. Santhappan	Tamil Nadu	1000
M. D. Mathai	Kerela	1000
Hasmukh Gutka	Navi - Mumbai	1000
Dharmendra R Shah	Mumbai	1000
Mary D'souza	Mumbai	1000
Melvin/Austin F'des	Navi - Mumbai	1000
Revin & Rion Pattar	Palghar	1000
Agnel Samuel Gaikwad	Mumbai	1000
Nexon Michael Bhanji	Bhayandar	1000
Hema Parmar	Mumbai	1000
Purva Patel	Mumbai	1000
Bosco J Fernandes	Tamil Nadu	1000
John M Gonsalves	Mumbai	1000
Caroline D' Souza	Bhayandar	1000
Annie Soman	Mumbai	1000
Nancy Nelson	Kalyan	1000
Ghanshyan K Patel	Mumbai	1000
Fittech Industries	Mumbai	1000
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Ankit G Patel	Mumbai	1000
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Varsha R Shukla	Mumbai	1000
Mrs Olga Lobo	Karnataka	1000
Maria S Arputharaj	Tamil Nadu	1000
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C. K. Fernandes	Gujrat	1000
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Anto Paul	Kerela	500
Lidiya Peter Sequeira	Palghar	500
Nathan Neelesh Dias	Mumbai	500
Jyoti Khote	Mumbai	500
Mangal Kamble	Mumbai	500
Stanly Lita D'souza	Karnataka	500
Geet Pujara	Thane	500
Daxaben Makwana	Gujrat	500
Swapnil G Kadam	Bhayandar	500
Khyati Vinod Thakker	Mumbai	500
Foram Shah	Mumbai	500
Marvin Manish Solanki	Gujrat	500
Kochala K. I.	Kerela	500
John Baptist	Chennai	500
Melvin Joseph	Karnataka	500
Benedict Antony Dcruz	Kerela	500
Alyssa Rebello	Mumbai	500
Ganita R. Sartape	Mumbai	500
Pvol Pinto	Mumbai	500
Sunil Joseph D'silva	Vasai	500
Pradeep Shah	Mumbai	500
Harsh Gosalia	Virar	500
Nirma Rakesh Bandari	Bhayandar	500
Victor R	Tamil Nadu	500
Alphonsa Jose	Kerela	500
Patrick Pereira	Mumbai	500
Bhanuben A Patel	Gujrat	500

BOB'S BANTER
ROBERT CLEMENTS



THE GOD THEY CANNOT CONTAIN..!

Why should anybody be frightened of Christians? We are barely 2.3 percent of India's population. We do not have the numbers to dominate elections. We do not have armies marching behind us. Most of our institutions are schools, hospitals, homes for the aged and centres caring for those whom society has forgotten.

Then why the fear?

Perhaps they are not frightened of 2.3 percent Christians. They are frightened of an uncontainable Christ.

Two thousand years ago, Herod tried to kill Him as a baby. He failed.

Religious leaders tried to silence Him. They failed.

Pilate tried to wash his hands of Him. He failed.

The Roman Empire nailed Him to a cross, sealed His tomb and stationed soldiers outside it. They failed.

On the third day, the stone rolled away.

Through history, emperors have banned His name, dictators have burned His Bible, regimes have imprisoned His followers and mobs have attacked His churches. Yet Jesus continues to walk through locked doors.

That is what unsettles earthly power.

You cannot contain a God who needs no microphone to speak.

You cannot arrest a God who enters the human heart.

You cannot frighten a God who has already defeated death.

Today, as conversion laws tighten in Maharashtra and similar legislation advances in Goa, Christians must be absolutely clear. We do not support conversion through force, fraud or inducement. Jesus never forced anyone to follow Him. He simply said, "Come, follow me." Matthew 4:19.

But Christ also commanded us, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

That command was not issued by a government. Therefore, it cannot be cancelled by one.

When Peter and John were ordered to stop speaking about Jesus, they replied, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20.

They did not riot. They did not threaten. They simply refused to become silent.

That must be our answer today.

Let every Christian obey the law, document every act of service and oppose injustice peacefully. But let no Christian allow fear to close a church, silence a prayer or stop a hand from reaching out to the suffering.

Remember Daniel in the lions' den.

Remember the three young men in the furnace.

Remember Paul singing in prison.

Remember the disciples emerging from hiding after Pentecost.

The Bible is filled with rulers who believed they could contain God. Today, their thrones are gone, their empires are history and many of their names are remembered only because they tried to stop Him.

But Jesus remains.

So do not be afraid, little flock.

They are not frightened of our percentage. They are frightened that when Christians forgive their attackers, love their neighbours, educate children, heal the sick and serve the abandoned, somebody may ask, "Why do you do this?"

And the answer will be one name.

Jesus.

The name above every name. The name no law can erase.

The God nobody has ever been able to contain..!

Write a Book

Speak @functions

Create change around you

Become a Powerful WRITER & SPEAKER!

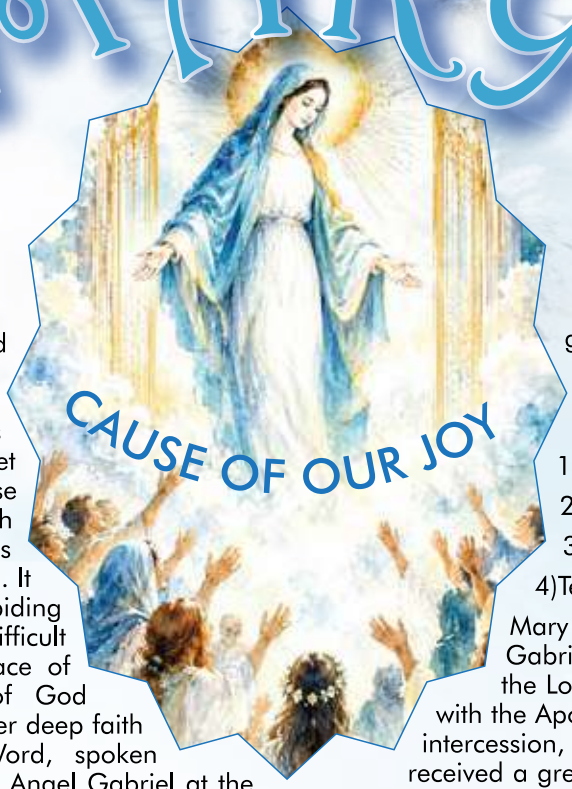
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MARY



Joy, as understood by the world is happiness, pleasure, fun, and merriment with loud laughter. Christian joy is different. It is a deep 'inner quiet joy' experienced by those possessing God through faith and the practice of charity. It is the 'fruit of living all the virtues'. It is an awareness of God's 'abiding presence' in the most difficult circumstances, even in the face of death. Mary, the Mother of God experienced this joy through her deep faith and obedience to God's Word, spoken through the prophets, and the Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation. She opened her heart and her womb to Jesus, as a human gateway for him to come into our sinful world and into human suffering, to set us free from the bondage of sin and death. Through her 'yes' to the Father's will, the gates of heaven were now opened to all God's children, and The Father's heart became 'an open door' for us to enter through Jesus. In the litany of the Blessed Virgin, Mary is invoked as, 'Gate of Heaven' and the 'Cause of our Joy', and we ask her to pray for us.

In Mary's acceptance of God's plan, she is filled with the presence of God and the fullness of joy through God's spirit, and hastens to share it with her cousin Elizabeth. "When the voice of your greeting came to my ears," exclaimed Elizabeth, "the babe in my womb leaped for joy." Mary brings this joy, through her son, into our world. In Lk 1: 46- 55 she breaks out into this hymn of rejoicing, 'The Magnificat.' My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

'Joy is the fruit of living all the virtues.' Christian virtues are a habitual firm disposition of the mind to do good, guided by faith in Jesus, obedience to his teachings, and imitation of his life. They are gifts of God, but require cooperation with God's grace.

The Theological Virtues relating directly to God are 1)Faith (Heb11:1)

2)Hope (Rom.15:13)

3)Love- love of God and neighbour (1 Cor13:13)

St. Paul tells us that the greatest of these is Love.

The Cardinal Virtues are natural or human virtues governing our daily actions, strengthened through practice and reason, and aided by divine grace.

1) Prudence (Prov14 :8)

2) Justice. (Mic 6:8)

3) Fortitude (Josh1:9) (2Tim1:7)

4)Temperance-self control

Mary is addressed by Archangel Gabriel, as 'Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you.' She was present with the Apostles and through her powerful intercession, in the Upper Room, they received a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the Church was born. Mary is the dispenser of graces to her children as she is the Mother of the Church. Grace and truth comes from Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. (Jn1: 17)

'DAUGHTER OF ZION'

In Mariology, Mary the Mother of God, is given the title, 'Daughter of Zion.' The prophecies of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in her. (Is 12:6; Zech 2:10; Zeph 3:14) Jesus gives her grace to see his presence in the difficult circumstances of her life, and to rejoice. Through her intercession we too her children receive this grace. 'Sing aloud O daughter of Zion, Rejoice and exult O daughter of Jerusalem! The King of Israel is in your midst, you shall fear evil no more. He is a warrior who gives victory, he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love. He will remove disaster from you. He will restore your fortunes. (Zeph 3:14-20)

HEAVEN ON EARTH

The Apostle John has a vision of this holy city, new Jerusalem, coming out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and he heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold the dwelling place of God is with men. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people. He will wipe away every tear and death shall be no more.' (Jn21:2-4)

Mary our mother has been preparing her church, the bride, through her many apparitions. She calls us to prepare our hearts for his coming, so united with Jesus, our bridegroom, our joy will be full on earth as it is heaven.

Norma Kamath

FR AGNEL GREATER NOIDA

HAPPENINGS

STUDENTS HAVE DONE US PROUD

Fr. Agnel School Greater Noida, are delighted to share remarkable achievements in Karate Championships.





Our students proudly participated in the Mahatma Gandhi 28th National and India–Sri Lanka International Karate Championship 2026, held on 29th and 30th August 2026 at the ICF A. Palani Samy Indoor Stadium, Chennai.

We proudly share their victory:

Individual
Kumite (9–10 Years Category):
Yuvraj Kasana – Gold Medal
Sarthak Chahar – Bronze Medal

Team Winners –
Uttar Pradesh Team:
Yuvraj Kasana
Sarthak Chahar
Shivaay Kaka
Keyan Mishra

Heartiest congratulations to our young champions and their dedicated teacher, Sir Prakash, for their outstanding performance and for bringing glory and pride to Fr. Agnel School.

इंडो-श्रीलंका कराटे चैंपियनशिप में युवराज ने जीते दो प्रथम स्थान



विजेता खिलाड़ी। स्रोत : कोच

ग्रेटर नोएडा (संवाद)। चेन्नई में 29 और 30 अगस्त को आयोजित एमजी 28वीं इंडो-श्रीलंका इंटरनेशनल कराटे चैंपियनशिप में ग्रेटर नोएडा के फादर एग्नल स्कूल की कक्षा पांच के छात्र युवराज कसाना ने शानदार प्रदर्शन किया। 9 से 10 वर्ष आयु वर्ग में युवराज ने एकल मुकाबले में प्रथम स्थान हासिल किया। टीम प्रतियोगिता में भी उन्होंने पहला स्थान प्राप्त कर दोहरी सफलता हासिल की। युवराज की उपलब्धि पर स्कूल के शिक्षकों और परिजनों ने खुशी जताई। उन्होंने युवराज को बधाई देते हुए भविष्य में भी बेहतर प्रदर्शन के लिए शुभकामनाएं दीं।

Brain TEASERS FUN FACT

ANSWERS!

1. **IT IS ALWAYS SPOTTED.**
2. **THEY MIGHT CRACK UP**
3. **IT WAS SHARP**
4. **A WINDOW**
5. **THREE**


13TH - 20TH
SEPTEMBER
BALBHAVAN
FUN FAIR

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AGNEL ASHRAM COMMUNITY & BALBHAVAN CHILDREN

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A CHEERFUL & MEMORABLE
DUSSEHRA

FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

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