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ASHRAM NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2026



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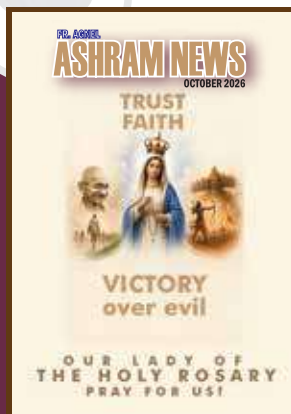
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OCTOBER



Come SEPTEMBER

Leon Bent

Come September! It's yesterday once more, for me! I simply bask in its aura, its divine melieu. On the twenty-sixth day of the month, the dark, watery womb of my dearly beloved mother, of revered memory, opened me to the 'light.' On the first day, according to the Creation account of the Bible, God created light. His eyes were filled with its 'goodness,' and so was my 'new-born', delicate, naked self!

During this time of the year, I simply sit in the bosom of 'Mother nature's bounty,' taking in it's medicated, therapeutic air. The filigreed, vividly fluorescent, giant canopy of tamarind tree's 'filigreed greens' nostalgically draws me into its refreshing, yet, ancient embrace. The leafy branches of a century-old 'karji' tree dance delightfully in a gesture of welcome. The driving, pelting, sensuous rain, a joy to behold, quickens my 'spirit.' I experience the richness of God's handiwork vividly, as I sit in my "study," lost in reverie and contemplation.

Many years ago, at the crack of dawn, I found myself on 'Jambool Hill' that rises conspicuously by the Ambarnath-Badlapur road, (off Ambarnath near the 'Ulhas river,' Ulhasnagar), surrounded by a misty, silver-lined, dark cloud-kissed chain of towering hills, as far as eye could see. I eagerly bent down, even as I stood on the dazzling throne of God, drawn in admiration and awe at a cluster of gorgeous, nay, exotic caterpillars in unison. The spectacle was fleeting, but would easily outdo a month-long "Retreat" in spiritual impact. Bishop Emeritus Alex Dias sfx, of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Fr. Ubaldo Fernandes sfx, (recently deceased), will vouch for this fact! The threesome was caught up, and savour to this very day, the Mount Tabor, 'Transfiguration experience!'

Quite some years ago, three Bishops were travelling to Nasik by car. The recitation of the Rosary was on. No flight of imagination, this! One old, saintly Bishop (long since enjoying eternal bliss), quite oblivious of the world, chanted devoutly: 'Hail Mary, full of grace!' What a delightful sight! Cows grazing on the

green, green, grass layered hill slopes, 'the Lord is with you!' Look, He's sitting cross-legged, Indian style, on a lotus in that tranquil pond over there, 'blessed are you among women.' Ah, watch those rustic women swaying back to their hamlets, as if, perfectly choreographed, balancing two-three brass vessels of water on their absolutely 'still-silent' heads, 'and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.' A cool, nonchalant, 'Amen,' his two companion Bishops responded, as if awakened from a lingering reverie. Oh, 'Amen' they reiterated, it is September 8th! The birthday of our Blessed Mother!

I take you down memory lane again. When I was courting a sprightly teenaged Lorraine, almost fifty years ago, I had a 'Rosary' (Rose-garden) in glorious September-bloom, on the terrace of my sprawling ancestral mansion, in Orlem, Malad. Even as I breathed in the fresh, subtle perfume, I was led down, down, down into a titillating, ravishing, resplendent rose-red city, where I saw, heard and smelt intricate bursts of brilliant light and design, a 'son-et-lumière' show really, with hushed, melodious tones of the 'Beatles' all-time favourite, "Yesterday," in the hazy background.

Come September, I mingle with my many 'creators', especially the Virgin Mary, who birthed the Son of God, the Son of Man and me! She is the 'archetype' (the original model) for all mothers! Each day, for innumerable years now, I 'pray' all the mysteries of the Rosary, in what is for me, a kind of Marian pilgrimage, with my earthly mother, Betsy and wife, Lorraine, on my left and Virgin Mary on my right. And, in a rather unmistakable way, I often sense a mystical union of flesh and flesh, spirit and spirit.

And this final flourish! This season of mists and mellow-fruitfulness contains the elixir of immortality, at its very core! It offers me rare and special moments, privileged situations, timely (kairotic) gifts with magical events.

The last word: May the 'Womb that is September,' add sugar, spice and sanctify everyone's life too!

Who is a Teacher: Someone who is so much "that's fine"

Ninette D'Souza

A Teacher is someone who sees potential in children before they see it in themselves, someone who figures out ways to help a child struggling with academics, someone who without being too obvious assigns responsibilities so that the quiet child can flourish, someone who works hard behind the scenes to build the confidence of children who are constantly made to feel like they're not enough, someone who cares about other people's children as if they are they're own.

To Teachers..... the Real Heroes

No matter how broken we are in our personal lives, as teachers we still gather our shattered pieces and get ready for school, to face our students, to give off our best. And that is why I say, if your students wish to speak with you outside the classroom on diverse matters, rest assured you're doing something right as a teacher inside it. Sometimes teachers reach out to students who are not even from the classes they teach. What a privilege to know that a student seeks you out because s/he knows that relationships matter to you. Often times children will take a liking for a subject only because they like the teacher teaching it. The opposite is also true, so teachers beware! When you are in a classroom you are in an unforgettable; sometimes unenviable position.

Teachers become favourites not because of the subjects they teach or even the pedagogy/methodology they use. Most often than not it is because of the way they make their students feel. Favourite teachers are those who take the time and trouble to really know their students, who will call out the student's name instead of the roll number during Roll Call, who will enquire about a student's absence from school, who will want to know a child's plans for the future and will try to guide accordingly. Favourite teachers celebrate a student's every win. Dear teachers remember you are a hero/heroine in the eyes of the child: for whom you surreptitiously left snacks in the class cupboard, whose educational trips, picnics and competitions you paid for, who was able to study beyond school because you persuaded the parents to let him/her do so, for those whose home you visited on a holiday to spend time with the family in dire straits, whom you loved no matter where s/he came from, realizing that with every child there is always more than meets the eye.

To Parents and all others

For those who think teachers are always cribbing here's something to ponder upon. What you think teaching is and what it actually is,





VERUS MUN 3.0:

Voice through the storm



aren't in the same frame. Academics may be 10% of the job profile. The remaining 90% involves managing behaviour, deescalating emotions, navigating the terrain of constantly shifting expectations from all stakeholders, creating resources from almost non-existent funds, being interrupted mid thought; mid sentence; mid lesson. Teachers are not frustrated because they hate teaching, they're frustrated because TEACHING has actually become a very small part of the vocation they had chosen.

I've been a tutor for the last 46 years and still am. Post Covid not only have students and their parents changed, teaching itself has and that includes tutoring. To be able to understand what it is like to teach post-Covid students, one would literally need to sit in a classroom daily to understand a teacher's dilemma! When parents come to ask me to tutor their children today, they already have a bargaining plan in place. 'I'm willing to pay your fees, you make sure my child gets good marks'. Unfortunately, the reality is vastly different. A standard 10 student finds certain Math concepts difficult to understand but has to struggle through it to score well. Anxious parents will continuously want to know why their child's marks are not improving with every successive test/exam. I can see the child is stressed and exhausted but the parent is only focussed on results. Today I am sorry to say I see fear in the eyes of children who are afraid of not reaching the bar set for them, afraid of failure because that will be a BIIIGGGG disappointment for their parents, and somewhere I feel the pressure too. Dear parents no one is against children getting high marks or percentages but you need to understand that your child is more than a number. Ask me every week, 'Is my child learning?' and I will be happy to give an update.

Hope springs eternal

Kids are kids even in this technology driven age. They're naturally curious, unpredictable, almost always hilarious, eager to learn if they're taught in ways that they like and above all their hearts are clean and full of love. And it is because of their love for children that in classrooms everywhere, for almost 2/3rd of a calendar year, teachers show up with care, commitment and creativity to encourage the meaningful work of their students. This attitude matters much. So, let's stop underestimating the quiet yet powerful work happening in schools all over.

Proud to be a simple School Teacher.

On 07 and 08 August 2026, something special unfolded in the halls of Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida. For two unforgettable days, VERUS MUN 3.0 turned our campus into a space of ideas, courage, and quiet determination.

Under the theme, Vox per Tempastatem "Voice through the Storm" students from different schools came together, both in person and online. They spoke, listened, disagreed, and slowly discovered the power of their own voices. In those moments of debate and dialogue, they grew in confidence, in clarity, and in the belief that their words matter.

We are deeply grateful to Barkha Dutt, our Chief Guest, and Kanchan Gupta, Guest of Honour, for blessing Day 1 with their presence. Our heartfelt thanks also go to Fr. Saji Palamattam, Chief Guest of Day 2, whose words left a lasting impression on every young mind present.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our school authorities Manager Rev. Father Bento Rodrigues, Assistant Manager Rev. Father Jovito Vas, Principal Sister Joanita Mendes, Vice Principal Sir Joji Joseph, and Administrator Sir Arun Jude. Their trust and guidance gave this conference its strong foundation.

A special note of gratitude goes to our Teacher Incharges, Ma'am Sonia and Ma'am Kiran, whose constant guidance, patience, and quiet encouragement supported the team at every step.

And behind every smooth session and every carefully planned detail stood our Secretariat a group of students who gave four long months of their time, energy, and heart. Their silent hard work, late nights, and quiet sacrifices made VERUS MUN 3.0 possible.

In a moment of pure excellence, Father Agnel School, Delhi, rose above the rest and claimed the prestigious Best School Delegation award a shining testament to their brilliance, unity, and unmatched spirit on the floor.

In the end, VERUS MUN 3.0 was not just a conference. It was a reminder that even when the world feels uncertain, young voices can still rise clear, honest, and full of hope.

Happy Birthday dear MOTHER MARY

Eusebio Gomes sfx

On 8th September the Church celebrates the birth of the nativity of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Coincidentally on this day, the Church in India also celebrates the "Girl Child Day." The cause of the celebration is the decline in sex ratio and increase in violence against the girl child. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) State of the World Population 2020 report, India accounts for 46 million out of the global total of 142 million missing females, representing roughly one in three missing girls worldwide due to pre-and post-natal sex selection practices. The 2011 Census of India shows a dismal sex ratio of 943 females per 1,000 males. Female foeticide is one of the extreme manifestations of violence against women. Female foetuses are selectively aborted after prenatal sex determination, thus avoiding the birth of girls. The birth of a girl child is often taken as a curse as she is perceived as an economic and social liability. Today in India the girl child is not well accepted. This is because of the economic burden the parents have to carry.

While I was the parish priest of St Mary's Church in Agra, I formed a group of actors from the parish youth to stage street plays in the villages of the Agra Archdiocese to create social awareness among the villagers. Fr Joe Vadakkekara, the Director of diocesan Social Work invited our group to train young local boys to act in the street plays in one of the villages of Kasganj district of Uttar Pradesh. While I was there training the boys, I came across a gentleman in the village who said that his newly born girl child was carrying the

weight of Rs. 5 lakhs on her head. What he meant was the huge dowry he has to arrange at the time of her marriage. Because of this evil practice of dowry, many young girls in India remain unmarried and become a burden to the parents. This phenomenon leads to the unwillingness of welcoming a girl child. In the northern parts of India there is a custom called "Kuam Puja"(Worship of the Well). When a boy child is born, the mother of the child along with the women of the village, go to the village well and there they worship the well in the honour of the boy. When a girl child is born this worship is not performed in the honour of the girl. This discriminatory practice has an impact on the girl child. She feels unwanted in the family.



When a girl child is born this worship is not performed in the honour of the girl. This discriminatory practice has an impact on the girl child. She feels unwanted in the family.

The birth of every child, girl or boy is a sign of great joy. St John Paul II in his 'Letter to Women' wrote, "The Church desires to give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for the 'mystery of woman' and for every woman for that which constitutes the eternal measure of her feminine dignity, for the 'great works of God' which throughout history have been accomplished in and through her that the greatest event in human history - the incarnation of God himself - was accomplished." In St John Paul II's document "Vita

Consecrata" published on 25th March 1996 he has written, "For the humankind woman is the symbol of God's love." The United Nations marked the first International Day of the Girl Child on 11th October 2012, focusing heavily on ending child marriage and addressing unique challenges faced by young girls globally. The birth of a child is always a joyful event in the family. Rabindranath Tagore says, "Every child comes into the world with the assurance that God is not yet fed up with the human race."

On 8th September we celebrate the birth of a woman who came with more than that assurance. She heralded, in the words of the Church, "the dawn of hope and salvation to the whole world." Born a great saint, her "soul was the most beautiful" ever created by God, exults St. Alphonsus de Ligouri. Mary the new Eve is a gift to the Church. Eve, the first mother brought suffering, pain and death by her disobedience. Mary, the

new Eve brought comfort, joy and life to us by her obedience. She surrendered herself to the will of God. She followed the command of God. Eve brought darkness and confusion through her sin. Mary, the second Eve brought light and understanding through her graceful life.

Mary is the joy of the Father who was extremely happy with her. She was His marvellous masterpiece. He was delighted with her because of her willingness to be the Mother of His Son Jesus Christ. Mary is the joy of Jesus Christ. He contemplated in her the tabernacle wherein He was to take flesh in order to save the world from sin. He was nurtured by her love, care and affection. He loved her more than anybody else. Saint Maximilian Kolbe said, "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never



love her more than Jesus did." Mary is the ultimate joy of the Holy Spirit. He saw in her His most chaste spouse on whom He would descend to form Christ in her womb. She was empowered by the Spirit to accept the call of God the Father. The expression of her thoughts in her song, "Magnificat" is the outcome of the indwelling of the Spirit in her. Spiritually when we are drowning in the sea of sinfulness, Mother Mary directs us to the shore of reconciliation and forgiveness i.e. she leads us to Jesus. When we are in gloomy mood and with drowsy face, Mother Mary brightens our day and envelopes us with her rays of cheerfulness. Let us accept and honour her as our dearest Mother. Saint Maximilian Kolbe said, "If anyone does not wish to have Mary Immaculate for his Mother, he will not have Christ for his Brother." United in Spirit let us celebrate the joyous occasion of the Nativity of Mother Mary and the conception and birth of every girl child. Happy birthday dear Mother Mary!

MARIAN APPARITIONS

Ninette D'Souza



In every corner of the world, in different times and cultures, one Mother comes to us with the same message. From quiet villages to crowded cities, through the many Marian apparitions, Heaven has touched earth and continues to call us to prayer, repentance and hope.

Presenting an interesting read on some unfamiliar visits of the Blessed Mother, from the 17th century to the 20th.

Our Lady of Laus

In 1664, the Virgin Mary appeared to a humble illiterate shepherdess, Venerable Benoite Rencurel, in the French Alps. This marked the longest apparition in Church history, spanning 54 years. During this time, Mary, identifying herself as the Mother of Jesus, conveyed a message focussed on conversion of sinners and the mercy of her Son. She requested a sanctuary funded by "the pennies of the poor", which is now the Basilica of Notre-Dame du Laus. To this day, pilgrims report experiencing 'heavenly perfumes' and healings. Vatican approved in 2008, it remains a powerful site of reconciliation and peace. The feast is celebrated on September 27.

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

In 1830, Catherine Laboure received visions of the Bl. Virgin Mary in Paris, who requested that a medal be struck. The design depicted Mary as the Immaculate Conception, crushing the serpent and radiating grace. She promised abundant blessings and protection to those who wore it around their neck with trust. Despite initial doubts, the multitude of healings and conversions led to it being named the 'Miraculous Medal'. Catherine lived humbly for 46 years serving the sick. The Church teaches that the medal is a sacramental, encouraging faith, prayer and God's grace, rather than superstition or luck. The feast is celebrated on November 27.



MARIAN APPARITIONS

20th JANUARY

19th SEPTEMBER

8th OCTOBER

17th JANUARY

8th SEPTEMBER

Our Lady of Sion

Born into a wealthy Jewish family, Alphonse Ratisbonne strongly opposed Catholicism especially after his brother became a priest. In 1842, while in Rome, he reluctantly agreed to wear the Miraculous Medal and pray the Memorare. Days later, inside a basilica, he experienced a powerful vision of the Virgin Mary, filled with light and mercy. This silent encounter revealed his sins and the truth of the Catholic faith, leading to an immediate inner conversion. 11 days later, he was baptised. The Vatican later confirmed the miracle. He eventually became a priest and dedicated his life in Jerusalem, founding the Sisterhood of Our Lady of Sion. The feast is celebrated on January 20.

Our Lady of La Salette

In 1846, atop the French Alps, a radiant 'Beautiful Lady' appeared weeping to two young shepherds. Dressed as a local peasant and adorned with a brilliant Crucifix and garlands of roses, she shared a sombre message. She warned that unless humans turned from worldliness and impiety, a devastating famine and divine justice awaited. The Virgin Mary's message emphasised the sanctity of Sundays and the seriousness of irreverence. Following a rigorous investigation, the Catholic Church formally recognised the apparition as authentic in 1851. This miraculous encounter led to the construction of a mountain shrine and the founding of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette.

The feast is celebrated on September 19.

Our Lady of Champion

In 1859, Mary appeared to Adele Brise in Champion, Wisconsin, urging her to teach children the Catholic faith. 12 years later, a massive wildfire swept through the region, destroying everything in its path. Terrified families gathered at our Lady's chapel to pray the Rosary. While the surrounding land was reduced to

ash, the shrine grounds remained untouched, preserved by a miraculous rain. Now a national shrine, it is the only Church approved Marian apparition site in America. Adele's story serves as a reminder to have courage, serve others and trust that Our Mother protects us during 'life's fires'. The feast is celebrated on October 8.

Our Lady of Hope

In January 1871, as Prussian forces advanced through France during the Franco-Prussian war, hope emerged in the small village of Pontmain. Two young boys reported seeing the Virgin Mary in the night sky above a barn while the community gathered in prayer. Clothed in a deep blue robe scattered with stars, she remained present throughout the evening Rosary and hymns. A golden message appeared: "Pray my children. God will answer soon". After a 2 hour vigil marked by peace and prayer, a vision of the Red Crucifix concluded the apparition. Soon after the Prussian advance halted and a truce followed. The feast is celebrated on January 17.

Our Lady of Gietrzwald

In 1877, during a time of repression against the Polish regime, our Lady appeared to two teenage girls in Gietrzwald. Seated on a throne adorned with pearls and speaking in the local dialect, she echoed her words from Lourdes, declaring, "I am the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception". Her message was both simple yet powerful: pray the Rosary daily. Over the course of 3 months of apparitions, a national revival emerged, bringing hope to a persecuted Church. On the centennial of these events, Gietrzwald was declared the only Church approved Marian site in Poland. Today, 149 years later, it continues to be a place of healing and faith, reminding us that even in darkness, heaven listens.

The feast is celebrated on September 8.



17th AUGUST

15th JANUARY

15th SEPTEMBER

28th NOVEMBER

4th SEPTEMBER

Our Lady of Knock

On a rainy evening, August 21, 1879, 15 villagers in County Mayo, Ireland, witnessed a silent heavenly apparition at the church gable in Knock. For over 2 hours, despite the heavy rain, the ground beneath the vision remained completely dry. The witnesses saw the Blessed Virgin Mary in prayer, crowned in gold, beside St. Joseph and St. John the evangelist, with an altar bearing the Lamb of God and the Cross, a powerful symbol of the Eucharist. The apparition's deeply Eucharistic and Marian message continues to attract pilgrims from around the world. In 2021, Pope Francis officially recognised Knock as an international Eucharistic and Marian shrine. The feast is celebrated on August 17.

Our Lady of Banneux

In 1933, 11-year-old Mariette Beco experienced 8 apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Banneux, Belgium. Initially met with skepticism from her lapsed Catholic family and the local priest, Mariette's deepening devotion and remarkable personal change drew attention. During the apparitions, Mary speaking only 91 words, identified herself as the "Virgin of the Poor", and led Mariette to a spring, for healing of the sick, and requested a chapel be built. She urged for continual prayer before her final farewell. The apparitions inspired numerous conversations, reports of miraculous healings and received official Church approval in 1947. The feast is celebrated on January 15.

Our Lady of Sorrows

In 1945, 2 girls from Spain, 10-year-old Marcelina Barosso Exposito and 17-year-old Afra Brigido Blanco, reported visions of the Virgin Mary as Our Lady of Sorrows in Chandavila, Extremadura, near the Portuguese border. Marcelina described Mary wearing a dark mantle adorned with stars and felt her loving embrace and kiss. One remarkable

miracle involved Marcelina walking on sharp chestnut thorns and stones on her knees without injury after Mary reassured her, "Do not be afraid". Numerous pilgrims later reported conversations, healings and spiritual consolation at the site. In August 2024, the Vatican granted a "nihil obstat", officially recognising its pastoral value. The feast is celebrated on September 15

Our Lady of Kibeho

On November 28, 1981, Virgin Mary appeared in Kibeho, Rwanda, as Nyina wa Jambo - Mother of the Word. Between 1982 - 1983, she appeared to 3 school girls, Alphonsine, Nathalie, and Marie Claire, calling for global conversion and devotion to the Seven Sorrows Rosary, while also warning of Rwanda's tragic genocide in 1994. Following a thorough investigation, the Catholic Church recognised these visionaries in 2001, confirming that their messages were in line with Catholic doctrine. Today the site is known as the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows and is Africa's only Vatican approved Marian site, dedicated to global warming and reconciliation. The feast is celebrated on November 28.

Seeking comfort amidst life's storms?

Meet Our lady of Consolation

Rooted in the words Jesus spoke on the Cross and made popular by the Augustinians, this ancient devotion reminds us that Mary is our ultimate source of peace. Legend has it that she gifted St. Monica a leather belt, (the Augustinian cincture) as a symbol of her motherly support! Whether you're seeking strength during difficult times or praying for a loved one, Mary is ever present to console you. The feast is celebrated on September 4.

Dear reader, I trust you enjoyed reading about these rare apparitions of our Blessed Mother. I found them interesting enough to make a note of them from the sharings of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

Mary of Nazareth: Mother of Faith & Hope



September holds a special place in the Church's liturgical calendar as Catholics all over the world celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows on 15 September. It is therefore a fitting time to reflect on the life, virtues, and enduring significance of Mary of Nazareth, the Mother of Jesus Christ and the Mother of the Church.

Mary's Unique Place in God's Plan

Mary of Nazareth occupies a central place in the Catholic faith and devotion. Chosen by God to be the mother of His Son, she responded to the angel Gabriel's message with complete trust and humility: **"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word"** (Luke 1:38).

Her "yes" to God changed the course of human history. Through her obedience and faith, the Saviour entered the world. Catholics honour Mary not as a goddess, but as the greatest disciple of Christ and a model of faithful living.

Mary: The First Disciple

Mary is often called the first and perfect disciple of Christ. Long before Jesus began His public ministry, she listened to God's word, accepted His will, and followed Him faithfully. Throughout her life, she pondered God's mysteries in her heart (Luke 2:19) and remained faithful even when she did not fully understand God's plans. Her discipleship serves as a model for every Christian seeking to follow Christ.

A Spiritual Mother for All

At the foot of the Cross, Jesus entrusted Mary to His beloved disciple John, saying, "Behold your mother" (John 19:27). The Church understands these words as a gift of spiritual motherhood to all believers.

For centuries, Christians have turned to Mary in prayer, seeking her maternal care and intercession. Just as she brought the needs of the wedding guests at Cana before Jesus, Catholics believe she continues to present the prayers of God's people to her Son.

Asking Mary to pray for us is similar to asking a friend or family member to pray on our behalf. The honour given to Mary always leads to Jesus Christ, who alone is Lord and Saviour.

Jubel D'Cruz

Mary in the Early Church

Following the Ascension of Jesus, Mary remained with the Apostles in prayer as they awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Her presence among the early Christian community highlights her continuing role in the life of the Church. From its earliest days, Christians looked to Mary as a source of encouragement, unity, and prayer.

Mary's Many Titles

Throughout the world, Mary is lovingly known by many titles, reflecting the diverse ways Christians experience her maternal presence. Among the most familiar are Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and Our Lady of Velankanni. These titles do not refer to different persons but to the same Blessed Virgin Mary, honoured in different cultures and historical circumstances. Each title highlights a particular aspect of her mission and her closeness to God's people.

The Four Marian Dogmas

The Church teaches four solemn truths about Mary:

Divine Motherhood – Mary is truly the Mother of God because she gave birth to Jesus, who is fully God and fully man.

Perpetual Virginity – Mary remained a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Christ.

Immaculate Conception – From the first moment of her existence, Mary was preserved from original sin by the grace of God.

Assumption – At the end of her earthly life, Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.

These dogmas reveal not Mary's greatness alone, but the greatness of God's grace working through her life.

Mary, Queen of Heaven

Because Mary shares fully in the glory of her Son, the Church honours her as Queen of Heaven and Earth. This title does not place her on an equal level with God but recognises the unique role given to her by Christ, the King of Kings. As Queen and Mother, she lovingly intercedes for the people of God.

Mary in Sacred Scripture

Although the Gospels do not record many words spoken by Mary, her actions speak powerfully. Her words at Cana, "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5), are among the last recorded words attributed to her in Scripture. They beautifully summarise her mission: always leading people to Jesus Christ.

From the Annunciation to Pentecost, Mary's life reveals unwavering faith, humility, and obedience. She consistently points beyond herself to her Son, inviting all people to trust in Him.

Our Lady of Sorrows

September invites us to contemplate Mary as Our Lady of Sorrows. The Church remembers the seven sorrows she endured, from Simeon's prophecy in the Temple to witnessing the crucifixion and burial of her Son.

Mary's suffering was united with Christ's suffering. She

remained steadfast in faith and is a source of comfort for all who experience grief, loss, and hardship.

Her example reminds us that faith does not remove suffering but helps us carry it with trust in our God.

The Rosary: A School of Prayer

Among the Marian devotions, the Rosary remains one of the most beloved. Through its prayers and mysteries, believers meditate on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the eyes of His Mother.

Far from being a repetition of words, the Rosary is a journey through the Gospel. It leads the faithful into deeper prayer, contemplation, and union with Christ.

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is another cherished devotion, symbolising a commitment to Christian living under Mary's maternal protection.

Mary's Final Journey

The Church teaches that at the end of her earthly life, Mary was taken body and soul into Heaven. This doctrine, known as the Assumption, was formally proclaimed by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

While the Church has not definitively stated whether Mary died before her Assumption, ancient Christian tradition speaks of her Dormition, or "falling asleep" in the Lord. According to this tradition, she peacefully completed her earthly journey before being assumed into heavenly glory.

Her Assumption is a sign of hope for all Christians, reminding us of the promise of resurrection and eternal life in Christ.

Mary and Christian Unity

While Catholics honour Mary with special devotion, she is also respected by many other Christian traditions and is honoured in Islam as Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa (Jesus). The Qur'an speaks of her holiness, making her one of the most revered women in religious history.

Her example of obedience to God, humility, and trust continues to inspire believers around the world and serves as a bridge of understanding among people of different faiths.

A Beacon of Hope

From Lourdes and Fatima to Velankanni, countless pilgrims continue to seek Mary's intercession and draw inspiration from her example. Her message remains timeless: trust in God, remain faithful in prayer, and follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

Mary's life was marked by humility, courage, and unwavering faith. As we honour her during this month, may we learn from her example and echo her words: "My soul magnifies the Lord" (Luke 1:46).

In a world often marked by uncertainty, division, and suffering, Mary remains a beacon of hope, faith, and perseverance. She teaches us to trust God's providence, even when the path ahead is unclear. As Mother of the Church and Mother of all believers, she continues to accompany God's people on their journey of faith.

May Our Lady of Sorrows comfort the afflicted, strengthen the weary, inspire us to follow Christ with love and courage, and always lead us closer to her Son, Jesus Christ.

JESUS' Invitation (and CHALLENGE)!

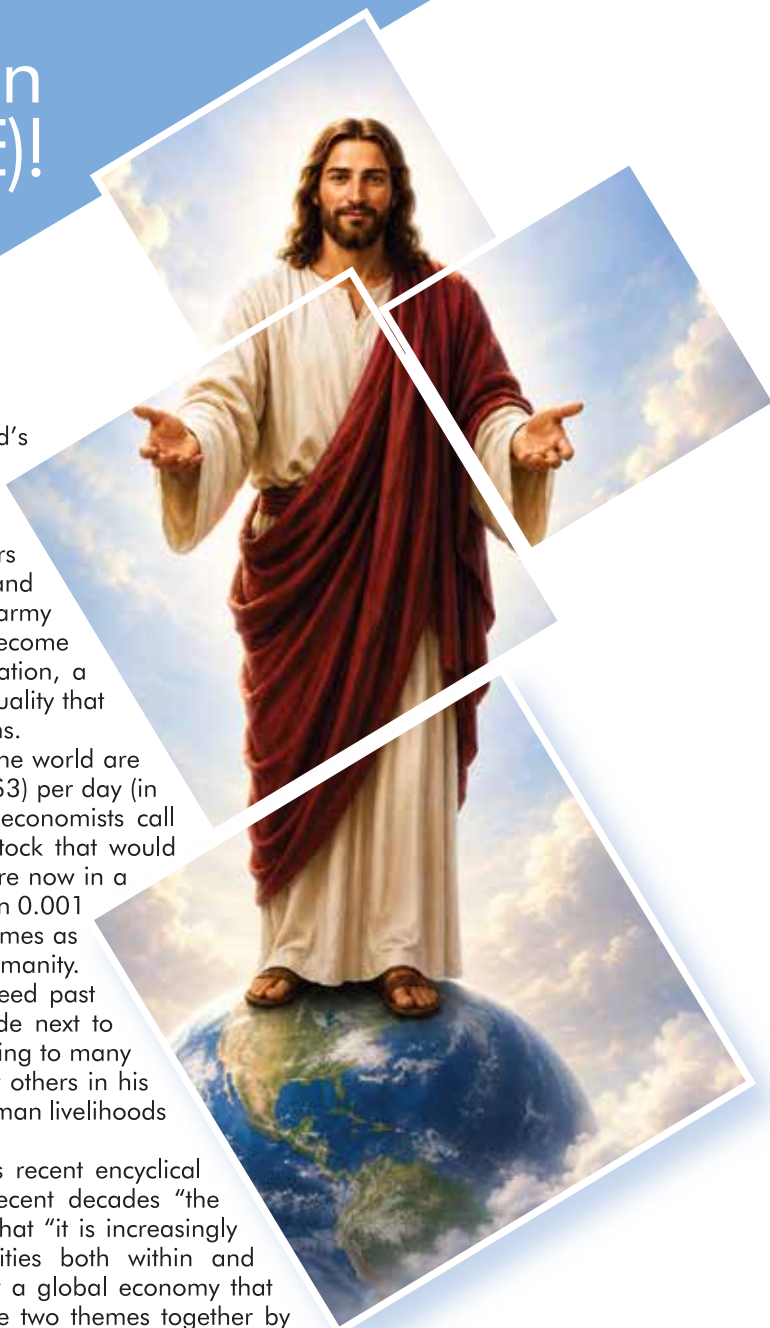
*Dr. Fr. Fio
Mascarenhas s.j.*

On 12 June this year, Elon Musk became the world's first trillionaire after his SpaceX's initial public offering on the US stock exchange was so successful. He joined a select group of the richest people who have ever lived. Most have been leaders of large empires, such as Augustus Caesar and Emperor Ashoka. Musk, however, hasn't needed an army or a physical empire to amass his riches. He has become stupendously wealthy through technological innovation, a globalised economy and the dizzying levels of inequality that are baked into the free market's reward mechanisms.

Meanwhile, more than one billion people around the world are surviving on less than the equivalent of Rs 300 (US\$3) per day (in local spending power). They are caught in what economists call "poverty traps" – unable to buy the tools or livestock that would enable them to lift themselves out of poverty. We are now in a situation where fewer than 60,000 people – less than 0.001 per cent of the world's population – control three times as much wealth as the entire bottom half of humanity. Superyachts moor next to slums; Lamborghinis speed past crumbling social housing; luxury watch shops trade next to grocery supermarkets. Perhaps this is why it felt jarring to many rightminded people that Musk, along with many others in his circle, has long been pursuing the automation of human livelihoods through artificial intelligence.

Into this reality our Pope Leo IV has launched his recent encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*. He points out that over recent decades "the world's wealth has grown in absolute terms" but that "it is increasingly concentrated in fewer hands, widening inequalities both within and between countries." At the same time, he calls for a global economy that values the dignity of every person. He draws these two themes together by demonstrating how artificial intelligence platforms – such as Elon Musk's Grok – risk exacerbating inequality further and damaging the dignity of human work. Pope Leo has drawn on the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching to add strength to his argument. He places particular emphasis on the principle of the universal destination of goods, which reminds us that God gave the Earth to the whole human family and, therefore, every person has an inherent right to goods such as soil, water, air and natural resources. Leo quotes Pope Saint John Paul II, who wrote that "God gave the Earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone" (*Centesimus Annus*, 31), and said "it is not in accordance with God's plan to use this gift in such a way that its benefits accrue solely to a select few."

However, our current economic system has flipped this principle on its head – private property rights are superseding the inherent right every person has to the world's resources. When the rate of growth of capital outstrips the rate of economic growth, as it does currently, the result is the acute concentration of wealth. This is because the ultra-wealthy are able to grow their wealth purely because they are already wealthy, not because of their hard work or invention. The ultra-wealthy can invest their money in housing stock, shares, debt, commodities – investment which





requires limited productive effort – and see their wealth grow faster than that of a person who is productively working to earn their income. In addition, this investment can “crowd out” the ability of the person working to purchase assets such as housing because its price is inflated by the ultra-wealthy’s investment. This is inefficient because it rewards unproductive wealth instead of productive contribution; it also leads to the Earth’s goods being concentrated in the hands of a few and being inaccessible to many. Good Pope Francis of happy memory, who frequently criticised the prevailing socio - economic system as “unjust at its root,” and “the economy that kills,” wrote: “There are a few who have too much, and too many who have little; that is the logic of today.”

Look around you at the over-populated slums in big cities like Mumbai (or Manila, or even Los Angeles in the USA), and the super-luxury housing available to the super-rich like the Adanis and Ambanis, and even to mediocre film stars and cricketers, and to families of Members of Parliament and Assemblies (30% or more are allegedly with criminal cases pending against them for years) and you can appreciate the Pope’s comment about “the logic of today.”

Where are we Christians in this “logic?” Are we, over 2 billion Christians and with possibly over 5 billion products of our much sought after schools and universities, making a significant positive impact on this “economy that kills?” No, because the “logic” of Jesus, our Master and Model, and of his “truly Good” News is a very different logic, and most of us are not courageous enough to live it. His famous “Beatitudes” are not impossible dreams, as the lives of innumerable Saints and other people of goodwill have proved over the centuries and even in modern times. Holy daily lives do not require super heroic actions or an excess of wealth. Washing dishes. Watching the moon rise. Listening to horns blaring in traffic. Listening to a child crying. Enjoying favourite melodies. Laughing heartily at a joke. The sacred has been hiding in plain sight all along.

Vatican II told us strongly that lay spirituality is holy: “Their work, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labor, their mental and physical relaxation if carried out in the Spirit, and the hardships of life if patiently borne – all of these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. During the celebration of the Eucharist, these spiritual sacrifices are most lovingly offered to the Father, along with the body of the Lord. Thus, as worshippers whose every deed is holy, the lay faithful consecrate the world itself to God” (LG, 34).

We must take these words to heart: “Worshippers whose every deed is holy!” Not only their sacrifices and penances; not only pilgrimages and devotions; not only the family rosary and whatever we spontaneously label ‘spiritual,’ but also the mundane details of “ordinary life”! Yes, the sacred has been hiding in plain sight all along. Our holiness is a gift given to us in baptism, and it marks every moment of our lives:

Faith isn’t about having all the answers. Certainty and faith are not the same thing. Faith is about learning to trust God when the answers disappear. “Faith texts” become “certainty texts” by living them daily. Many Saints took a long time to “claim” their baptismal holiness, and to live “a new life in the Spirit” (like Sts Augustine and Ignatius, Theresa of Avila and Mother Teresa, etc., and so many historical as well as modern martyrs). “Forgetting the things of the past and straining towards the goal of their upward call in Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:12-14), they lived the goal of holiness in daily life. We too can defy and overcome “the logic of today’s money and wealth obsessed world.”

This September 8th, as we celebrate our Mother Mary’s birth and vocation, let us ask Jesus for Mary’s gift of a simple and strong faith, and not keep on asking only for material blessings. Let us ask that God’s Spirit may lead us into “a logic, not of this world, but one guaranteed by the Gospels.”

Fr Fio s.j. has just published his 30th book, ‘AMAZING GRACE’, available at St Paul’s Fathers, Mumbai.

Angels along the Journey of Literacy

& the Feast of ARCHANGELS



MICHAEL



GABRIEL

The month of September is filled with celebrations. Beginning with Teachers' Day, it takes us through a rich tapestry of occasions: the feast of St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa), International Literacy Day, Engineers' Day, the International Day of Peace, the Feast of the Three Archangels, World Heart Day, Ganesh Chaturthi, the feasts of Mother Mary, and many others.

Each of these celebrations invites us to pause, remember, and give thanks. In this reflection, I would like to highlight my own experiences in the literacy movement and the people I encountered along the way—people whom I came to recognise as angels in my life. And then, I relate them to the Archangels whom we remember too this month.

Looking back: National Adult Education Programme (NAEP)

The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was a landmark initiative launched by the Government of India on 2 October 1978, during the Janata Government led by Prime Minister Morarji Desai. It was the first nationwide, organised effort to address adult illiteracy on a massive scale.

The programme primarily targeted non-literate adults in the 15–35 age group and aimed to reach

approximately 100 million people within five years. Its vision went far beyond teaching adults to read and write. NAEP had three important dimensions: literacy, functionality, and social awareness. Literacy included reading, writing, and numeracy; functionality sought to equip learners with knowledge and skills relevant to their work and daily lives; and social awareness encouraged them to understand their rights, responsibilities, and role in society.

An important feature of NAEP was its emphasis on people's participation. Government departments, universities, colleges, voluntary organisations, and youth groups were involved in establishing literacy centres and supporting the programme.

Although the programme faced difficulties in implementation and did not fully achieve its ambitious targets, it marked a significant turning point in India's literacy movement. It opened the door for many later initiatives, including the National Literacy Mission launched in 1988.

Personal and political significance of NAEP

Personally, the NAEP had a great significance for me. I had just finished my master's degree in Andragogy (Adult



RAPHAEL

Education) from Madras University and, as a young man in my twenties, I was madly eager to wipe out illiteracy and be part of the movement of Total Literacy in Kerala, which we eventually succeeded in doing. Kerala was declared totally literate in 1991, as the first state in India to achieve the dream.

Politically, India had survived the ignominious Emergency period, and the first-ever Janata Party Government under Morarji Desai was inaugurated. Morarji Desai became Prime Minister on 24 March 1977. His government represented a significant restoration of democratic politics. It emphasized civil liberties, democratic institutions, decentralisation, accountability, and freedom of expression.

The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), launched on 2 October 1978, reflected this broader vision. Literacy was understood not merely as learning to read and write, but as a means of developing awareness, participation, and empowerment among ordinary citizens.

I met angels in the Literacy movement

Almost five decades later, I recall the angels I met during my literacy work: eminent activists from Kerala like Mr. P.N. Panicker and Dr. K. Sivadasan Pillai, and hundreds of activists and learners, including some sex workers who were learners in our classes.

Who are angels, really? Angels are messengers. The Greek original does not mean a heavenly being. The religious meaning of an angel as a heavenly messenger developed only from its use in the Greek translation of Jewish scriptures and Christian writings.

Hence, angels, in their original meaning, are creatures who announce good news. It is in that sense I recall those angels whom I accompanied, who taught the most ignorant, fisherfolk, Dalits, and the most marginalised the values of human dignity, Love, Justice, and Peace. Those activists, who are in their golden years now, remind me of the power of knowledge, activism, and love.

Who can forget the lines from the ABBA music group?

I have a dream, a song to sing
To help me cope with anything
If you see the wonder of a fairy tale
You can take the future even if you fail
I believe in angels
Something good in everything I see
I believe in angels
When I know the time is right for me
I'll cross the stream, I have a dream

Moving on to the Archangels

As I grew in my faith and knowledge, I came closer to the idea of angels as spiritual beings created by God who serve Him and carry out His purposes. They are servants, messengers, worshippers, and even agents of judgment. I seek their intercession.

The feast of the Archangels holds deep spiritual significance as it honours the three celestial messengers named in the Sacred Scripture: Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Popularly known as Michaelmas, the day serves as a powerful reminder of God's active protection, guidance, and healing in human history, with each archangel representing a distinct dimension of divine care: Saint Michael signifying defence against spiritual evil and ensuring protection, Saint Gabriel embodying divine revelation, announcing the Incarnation to Mary, and Saint Raphael representing providential healing and companionship for travellers.

What am I called for?

Linking two seemingly unrelated events—the celebration of Literacy Day and the Feast of the Archangels—what are the lessons, and what am I called for?

First of all, the literacy movement was about much more than teaching adults to read and write. It was about enabling people to participate, to question, to claim their rights, and to live with dignity. In today's India, the work of literacy remains unfinished. Ignorance and superstitions are celebrated even by universities and our own political leaders. Hate-mongers seem to rule the country now. Can we wake up for a second struggle for independence?

Angels are real. They come in various shapes. They come when we call for them. They come even when we least expect.

The challenge is then to listen, and to respond to the call of angels/God.

Ezra & Nehemiah: Rebuilding a Nation, Renewing



There are moments in life when everything seems broken, relationships, communities, even faith itself. After the Babylonian Exile, the people of Israel found themselves in just such a situation. Jerusalem lay in ruins, the Temple had been destroyed, and many had lost hope. Into this challenging time God raised two remarkable leaders, Ezra and Nehemiah. Though their responsibilities differed, they shared one mission: to restore God's people. One rebuilt the hearts of the people through God's Word, while the other rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem through courageous leadership. Together, they remind us that true renewal begins with God and requires both spiritual and practical commitment.

The Meaning of Their Names

The name Ezra comes from the Hebrew Ezra, meaning "help" or "the Lord helps." His very name reflects God's faithful assistance in restoring His people. Nehemiah comes from the Hebrew Nechemyah, meaning "the Lord comforts" or "Yahweh has comforted." Through these two men, God indeed became the helper and comforter of Israel after years of suffering and exile.

Historical and Biblical Context

Ezra and Nehemiah lived during the Persian Empire in the fifth century BC, after the Babylonian Exile. In 539 BC, King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and permitted the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland. Although many returned, Jerusalem remained a shadow of its former glory. The Temple had been rebuilt, but the city walls were broken, and the people's spiritual life had become weak and compromised. Surrounded by hostile neighbours and burdened by discouragement, Israel needed both

religious renewal and leadership. It was into this setting that God called Ezra and Nehemiah.

God's Chosen Servants

Ezra was a priest and skilled scribe "well versed in the Law of Moses". His primary mission was to teach God's Law, restore faithful worship, and renew the covenant

between God and His people. He recognized that rebuilding a nation required more than stones and buildings, it required transformed hearts.

Nehemiah served as the cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes, a position of great trust and responsibility. When he learned that Jerusalem's walls remained in ruins, he was deeply moved. With the king's permission, he returned to Jerusalem as governor to fortify the city's defences, rebuild and strengthen the community.

Responding to God's Call

Both men responded generously to God's call. Ezra devoted himself to studying, practising, and teaching the Law of the Lord. He courageously confronted religious compromise, encouraged repentance, and led the people back to faithful covenant living.

Nehemiah first turned to prayer and fasting before taking action. Trusting in God's guidance, he organized the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls despite fierce opposition, ridicule, and threats from enemies. His leadership united the people, and through perseverance the walls were completed in just fifty-two days.

One of the most moving moments in Scripture occurs when Ezra publicly proclaims the Book of the Law after the walls are completed. As the people listen, they are deeply moved to tears. Yet Nehemiah reminds them: "The joy of the Lord is your strength". Together they lead the nation in repentance, worship, and renewed commitment to God's covenant.

Models of Faith and Leadership

Ezra and Nehemiah embody virtues that remain essential for every Christian. Ezra demonstrates a deep love for God's Word,

humility, obedience, and zeal for authentic worship. Nehemiah exemplifies courage, perseverance, prayerful dependence on God, integrity, and servant leadership. Neither sought personal glory; both desired only that God's name be honoured and His people restored. Their lives show that lasting reform begins with prayer, faithful leadership, and wholehearted trust in the Lord.

Their Place in Salvation History

Ezra and Nehemiah played a crucial role in preserving Israel's faith after the exile. By restoring worship, teaching the Scriptures, and rebuilding Jerusalem, they prepared the Jewish people for the centuries leading to the coming of the Messiah. Their work safeguarded the covenant community from which Jesus Christ would be born. Ezra's dedication to God's Word anticipates Christ, the living Word, while Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem foreshadows Christ, who builds His Church as a spiritual temple founded on faith and unity.

Lessons for Christians Today

Our world also needs rebuilding. Families experience division, communities face conflict, and many people drift away from God. Ezra reminds us that every genuine renewal begins by listening to God's Word, studying it, and putting it into practice. Nehemiah teaches us that faith must lead to courageous action. Prayer and hard work belong together. Like them, we are called to rebuild not only churches and institutions but also relationships, families, and our own spiritual lives. Whenever we allow God to shape our hearts and strengthen our hands, He can accomplish great things through ordinary people.

Ezra and Nehemiah remind us that God never abandons His people, even after failure or suffering. He continues to raise faithful men and women who inspire hope, restore what has been broken, and lead others back to Him. Their story invites every Christian to become a builder of faith, unity, and holiness, trusting that with God's help every ruin can become a place of new life.

Quiz: Ezra and Nehemiah – Builders of Faith and Hope

1. What does the name "Ezra" mean?

- A. God is my judge
- B. The Lord helps
- C. God remembers
- D. The Lord saves

2. What does the name "Nehemiah" mean?

- A. The Lord comforts
- B. God is faithful
- C. My strength is the Lord
- D. The Lord provides

3. During which period did Ezra and Nehemiah live?

- A. During the reign of King David
- B. During the Babylonian Exile
- C. After the Babylonian Exile under the Persian Empire
- D. During the time of the Maccabees

4. What was Ezra's primary role?

- A. Prophet
- B. Priest and scribe
- C. Judge
- D. King

5. Before going to Jerusalem, what position did Nehemiah hold?

- A. Commander of the army
- B. High Priest
- C. Cupbearer to the Persian king
- D. Governor of Judah

6. What was Ezra especially known for?

- A. Leading military battles
- B. Building the Temple
- C. Teaching and explaining God's Law
- D. Writing the Psalms

7. What was Nehemiah's main mission?

- A. Rebuild the Temple
- B. Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem
- C. Lead Israel out of Egypt
- D. Defeat the Philistines

8. Before beginning his mission, Nehemiah first responded by

- A. Gathering an army
- B. Leaving immediately for Jerusalem
- C. Praying and fasting
- D. Asking the people for money

9. Which king gave Nehemiah permission to return to Jerusalem?

- A. Cyrus
- B. Darius
- C. Artaxerxes
- D. Nebuchadnezzar

10. Approximately how long did it take to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?

- A. 40 days
- B. 52 days
- C. 70 days
- D. One year

11. Which book of the Law did Ezra publicly read to the people?

- A. The Book of the Law of Moses
- B. The Book of Psalms
- C. The Book of Isaiah
- D. The Book of Proverbs

12. Complete the verse: "The joy of the Lord is your _____."

- A. Hope
- B. Strength
- C. Shield
- D. Salvation

13. Which virtue is especially reflected in Ezra's life?

- A. Greed
- B. Love for God's Word and obedience
- C. Political ambition
- D. Military courage

14. Which virtue is especially reflected in Nehemiah's life?

- A. Perseverance and courageous leadership
- B. Wealth and success
- C. Artistic talent
- D. Public speaking

15. Ezra and Nehemiah worked together primarily to

- A. Establish a new kingdom
- B. Restore God's people spiritually and physically
- C. Conquer neighbouring nations
- D. Build a palace for the king

16. Which of the following best describes Ezra and Nehemiah together?

- A. One rebuilt the Temple and the other rebuilt the Ark of the Covenant.
- B. One rebuilt the people's faith, and the other rebuilt Jerusalem's walls.
- C. One became king, and the other became high priest.
- D. Both served as military generals.

17. What lesson do Christians learn from Ezra and Nehemiah?

- A. Success depends only on human effort.
- B. Prayer should replace action.
- C. God renews His people through faith, prayer, and faithful service.
- D. Leadership is only for priests and kings.

18. In which books of the Bible do we read about these two leaders?

- A. Genesis and Exodus
- B. Ezra and Nehemiah
- C. Judges and Ruth
- D. Kings and Chronicles

19. Ezra devoted himself to studying, practising, and teaching

- A. Persian law
- B. Roman law
- C. The Law of the Lord
- D. Greek philosophy

20. The lives of Ezra and Nehemiah remind us that

- A. God can restore what is broken when people trust and obey Him.
- B. Faith is a private matter.
- C. Only miracles can change society.
- D. Wealth is the greatest blessing.

Answer Key

1B; 2A; 3C; 4B; 5C; 6C; 7B; 8C; 9C; 10B; 11A; 12B; 13B; 14A; 15B; 16B; 17C; 18B; 19C; 20A



Managing stress Holistically & Efficiently



bad stress or distress. In fact, stress related diseases kill more people in the world than any other illness. As such, there is today the paramount need for societal priority attention to stress reduction in every aspect of human activity.

How can one be successful and yet be stress free? To manage stress, both skill and strength are required. In a competitive world, skills are essential to succeed. However, skill alone is not enough. Strength, mental strength in particular, is needed to keep stress at bay. Today, depression, divorce and suicides are very common, especially amongst youngsters. This is because one is not equipped to handle the challenges of life.

1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT -

Ibonio D'Souza

change them; what we cannot change, we have to learn to accept. Procrastination is another major cause of stress - Tomorrow's work do today, today's work now. If the moment is lost, how the work will be done? By postponing, we build up the list of things to do and end up in sheer despair. We not do our exercise till our health collapses. Students study at the last minute for their exams feeling frustrated and tense.

2. LIFESTYLE -

We have too many things to do, we are constantly dealing with day-to-day situations on a war footing. Doctors are of the opinion that many chronic heart diseases and other ailments are caused only because of our hectic lifestyle. More than medicines, what we need is to make changes in our lifestyle - in the type of food we eat, our exercise regimen and our sleeping habits. For our youngsters, relaxing begins at night, after 10 o'clock, by watching television late into the night. We sleep late and rarely do we enjoy the beauty of sunrise and the fresh morning air. One has to learn to slow down. Instead, life in the modern world is becoming faster. We eat our meals mechanically, gobbling down the food to save time. Often, we are not even aware of what we eat.

3. DEVELOPING PHYSICAL STRENGTH -

Breathing must be slow, steady and deep. When we get stressed, our breathing becomes quick and shallow, and a large amount of stress hormones are secreted in the body. One must have some good recreation or some hobby in life which will rejuvenate the senses. One should avoid passive entertainment that makes a person dull and lethargic. Exercise is a must. Our lifestyle has become sedentary. Young people work ten to fourteen hours at the computer. We have to stretch and relax each part of the body consciously to let go the accumulated stress. Each one's body is made differently. We have to adapt ourselves to our own body and lifestyle after proper stock taking and analysis. Also, simple and pure diet with plenty of fresh vegetables and less of oil, spicy or stale food will provide with more life energy.

4. MENTAL STRENGTH -

On average, we think 60,000 thoughts a day. The mind gets stressed when we do not control the quality and quantity of our thoughts. Lesser the number of thoughts, greater is the peace of mind. We have so many thoughts because we take everything personally and brood over it. If we live selflessly and without conflict, the number of thoughts in the mind will automatically reduce. There are six enemies of the mind: selfishness, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy. Even one of them is enough to create

agitation. Our minds have all the six along with fear, sorrow, an likes and dislikes. No body teaches us how to handle these enemies. The root cause of all of them is selfishness. The more selfless we are, the stronger we become, our stress is reduced automatically. When we love something more than ourselves, we become selfless. Expanding our mind to love selflessly is one important method of reducing stress.

5. CLARITY OF THOUGHT -

One of the reasons for stress in today's world is the availability of too many choices which leads to indecision. Advertisements of food, consumer durables, clothing, etc. bombard us with many tempting alternatives. Faced with innumerable choices, we are unable to decide and the indecision invariably causes stress. Clarity of thought makes us stress free.

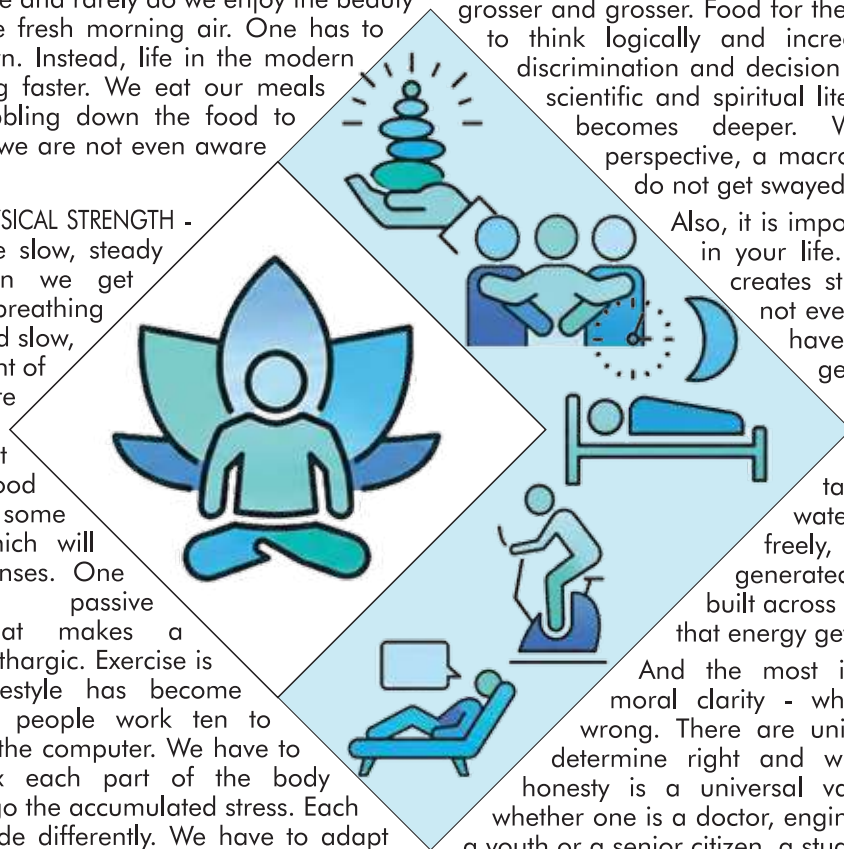
We eat food to nourish and nurture our body, but we do not nourish the intellect and thus intellect becomes grosser and grosser. Food for the intellect is to train it to think logically and increase its capacity of discrimination and decision making. If we study scientific and spiritual literature, our thinking becomes deeper. We get a wider perspective, a macro picture of life, and do not get swayed easily.

Also, it is important to have a goal in your life. Absence of a goal creates stress, which we may not even be aware of. If we have a goal, our energy gets harnessed, when there is no goal, our energy is dissipated. Let us take the example of water. When it is flowing freely, energy cannot be generated, but when a dam is built across the flowing water, all that energy gets harnessed.

And the most important aspect is moral clarity - what is right what is wrong. There are universal values which determine right and wrong. For instance, honesty is a universal value, irrespective of whether one is a doctor, engineer or home-maker, a youth or a senior citizen, a student or professional - all have to be honest at all times, in order to avoid stress.

1. SPIRITUAL DEPTH - We must have the necessary spiritual knowledge to withdraw the mind from external disturbances in order to experience the peace and silence within. Through daily prayers and meditation we can consciously try to make our mind quiet. When we are anchored within ourselves, problems do not disturb us.

Living in this holistic way we can manage our mind efficiently and be free from the thralldom of the destructive stress - the silent killer of man.





THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN THE LIFE OF ST. TERESA OF KOLKATA

In her speech on receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1979, Saint Teresa of Kolkata, fondly remembered with love and respect as Mother Teresa, said she felt at home in Kolkata surrounded by love with real, real understanding love. Born in Albania in 1910 as Agnes Gonxha, the Holy Spirit revealed to her at the age of 12, her mission and the call of God to spread the love of Christ. When she turned 18, she joined the Sisters of Loreto in Dublin from where in 1929 she was sent to India to teach at St Mary's High School in Calcutta.

The knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit. (CCC 683). The Holy Spirit reveals the Plan of God to those who are chosen not merely by talent and ability alone; to help them identify the Work they are called to and set apart for. The Holy Spirit revealed to her the problems of rejection, loneliness, abandonment in the people, moving her to find solutions to bestow love and care to the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta. On a train journey to Darjeeling, she sensed a second call from God: to live and work amongst the destitute, the dying, lepers and the orphan children.

The Holy Spirit guided the early church to a seemingly insignificant work viz taking care of the poor and needy. With permission from her Superiors, Mother Teresa left the comforts of her Convent to commence her mission to bring hope to the destitute and dying, a difficult way she embraced becoming an exemplary witness of Christ's love to the wounded and forsaken. It is Christ who is seen, but it is the Spirit who reveals Him (CCC 689).

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization. In 1950, Mother Teresa received permission from the Vatican to start the Missionaries of Charity in response to Jesus' revelation to her of the neglect of the poor and His longing to love souls. She began with a few volunteers to give love and care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after, to help the terminally ill die with dignity and peace. Today her mission continues in many centres across the globe with a large army of Sisters and Brothers. In her own words "It's God's work. I am like a pencil in His Hand. The pencil has only to be allowed to be used". Mother Teresa's depended on Divine Providence to meet the needs of the poor. She was instrumental in building a bridge between resourceful humanity who through their continual giving and sharing could meet the needs of the unreached and lonely.

The Holy Spirit is manifested in the Charisms and Ministries with extraordinary or simple gifts given for the common good of the world, to make the world a better place (CCC 688, 799). Mother Teresa was noted for her capacity for hard work, a woman of profound faith and prayer, love for her sisters, courage and faithfulness in small things, embracing poverty of the people and radiating joy. She visited families, washed the wounds of ill, loved orphan children, meeting everyone with a smile. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. Mother's Teresa spoke words of the Truth, to defend life and safeguard Families for she said, "I believe Love begins at home". In her own words "Don't hesitate to speak the truth, to love and be loved". Undaunted and fearless, her life radiated "Supernatural Love in action" touching the lives of the helpless. Today her words resound: You and I who have been created to love and to be loved, we have been created for greater things. Her feast day is celebrated on September 5th.

Severina Pires

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Dolly Parton died last month at the age of eighty, and I imagine heaven had a small problem receiving her.

"Name?" asked the angel at the gate.

"Dolly Parton."

"Occupation?"

"I sang a little."

"A little?" asked the angel, looking through a very large heavenly file. "You sold more than a hundred million records."

"Well," Dolly might have replied with that famous smile, "God gave me a voice. I merely returned it with a tune."

That, I believe, was the secret behind Dolly Parton.

She knew she was talented. Humility does not mean pretending that God gave you nothing. It means knowing exactly where everything came from.

Dolly never hid her success. She wore sparkling costumes, towering wigs and enough glitter to provide electricity to a small town. Yet beneath all that glamour was a woman who remembered the little wooden church in the mountains, the prayers of her mother and the faith of her family.

She once described God as her co writer and co pilot.

What a magnificent way to look at life.

Most of us make God a passenger. We ask Him to sit quietly in the back seat while we drive, choose the road, ignore the warning signs and finally blame Him when we land in a ditch.

Dolly allowed Him into the cockpit.

Perhaps that was why fame never seemed to make her feel taller than other people, even if her hair certainly did.

She laughed at herself before anyone else could. She did not use humility as a performance. She simply understood that applause belongs to the moment, while the gift belongs to God.

Her faith also left her with little time to judge others. She believed that judging belonged to God and loving belonged to us. Sadly, many religious people have reversed those duties.

We judge enthusiastically and leave the loving to God.

Dolly's faith was heard not only in gospel songs but also in her generosity. Through her Imagination Library, she placed millions of books into the hands of children. She did not merely sing about love. She packed it, posted it and sent it into homes.

And that is perhaps why the world mourns her today.

Not simply because a great voice has fallen silent, but because that voice constantly reminded us to laugh, to give, to believe and to look upward.

Yesterday, when Dolly reached heaven, I suspect the angel finally closed that enormous file.

"Welcome," he said. "You used your gifts well."

And Dolly probably smiled and replied,

"They were never mine in the first place!"

True humility is not hiding your light.

It is shining brilliantly while remembering who lit the lamp...!



Fr. Agnel's

B L E S S I N G S

FOR SAFE DELIVERY.

Sangeeta Dabre - Vasai

BIRTHDAY & GOOD HEALTH OF ALL FAMILY MEMBERS.

Malvika Mahajan - Bandra

THANKSGIVING - FAVOURS RECEIVED.

Marilyn Michael & Family - Mumbai

FOR GOOD HEALTH IN FAMILY, GOOD LIFE PARTNER & ALSO FOR DEAR DEPARTED SOULS IN FAMILY.

Theresa Monserate - Bhandup

BLESSINGS UPON BOAT

Thomas Dhopalkar - Uttan

THANKSGIVING - FAVOURS RECEIVED.

Flex Alibeg - Vasai

THANKSGIVING - GOOD MED. REPORT.

Michael Gonsalves - Vasai

BLESSINGS UPON HOUSE.

Asunta Denis Gangul - Arnala

GOOD HEALTH OF PARENTS, GOOD EMPLOYMENT & MARRIAGE.

Alfred Jose Kurian - Mira Road

THANKSGIVING - FAVOURS RECEIVED & GOOD HEALTH.

Gerson S. Dias - Mumbai

THANKSGIVING & BLESSINGS UPON BOAT, BUSINESS & FOR SPEEDY RECOVERY OF SHALTON DALME.

Uttan

THANKSGIVING & BLESSINGS UPON BUSINESS OF FISHING

Ludas Damet - Uttan

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS.

S. Philio - Wadala

BIRTHDAY, GOOD HEALTH OF FAMILY MEMBERS & FOR DEAR DEPARTED SOULS IN FAMILY.

Christopher D'Mello - Virar

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL ADMISSION, GOOD HEALTH & PEACE IN FAMILY.

Allan Dabre - Vasai

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, GOOD HEALTH & FOR DEAR DEPARTED SOULS IN FAMILY.

Theresa Joseph - Belapur

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREER, WORLD PEACE & DEAR DEPARTED SOULS OF PRIESTS & NUNS.

Ludas Damet - Uttan

DEAR DEPARTED SOUL OF G. ANTHONY S. THYAGARAJAN.

Kani - Dharavi

DEAR DEPARTED SOULS OF XAVIER & GAMA FAMILIES.

Maria Xavier - Santacruz

DEAR DEPARTED SOULS OF COLASSO, DABRE & D'MELLO FAMILIES.

Allan Dabre - Vasai

DEAR DEPARTED SOULS OF DACOSTA, AFONSO & FERNANDES FAMILIES.

Antonio Xavier Dacosta - Andheri

DEAR DEPARTED SOULS OF ENTIRE D'SOUZA FAMILIES.

Infanta D'Souza - Mahim

SPECIAL INTENTIONS FOR SETTLEMENT OF PROPERTY & FOR DEPARTED SOULS.

Mauren Tantony - Bandra

GOOD HEALTH & SPEEDY RECOVERY FROM CANCER.

Anthony Pereira - Malad

GOOD EMPLOYMENT.

Ravi Kumar - Mumbai

TO OUR LADY OF FATIMA.

Stella D'Souza



There is no JOY
GREATER
than the
THE JOY OF GIVING

Dorothy Ann Philomena Singh, Mysuru

I have contributed an amount of Rs.1200/- via NEFT for the Welfare of the Balbhavan boys and Ashram at Fr. Agnel Ashram.

Geeta Naik, Gamdevi

We are pleased to sponsor monthly an amount of Rs.1250/- towards the mini Sponsorship of Balbhavan boy.

Nancy Belinda Carlo, Andheri

As a token of thanksgiving for various favours received through the intercession of Fr. Agnel. I have donated an amount of Rs.2000/- through UPI for the welfare of Balbhavan boys and Fr. Agnel Ashram.

Heli Shah, Andheri

I have made a contribution of Rs.2001/- through UPI for the welfare of Balbhavan boys and Fr. Agnel Ashram.

Agnelo Anand Joseph Olakkengi, Mulund

We are Blessed and happy to provide a donation of Rs.2000/- via EDC towards the grocery requirements in Balbhavan.

Sebastian Fernandes, Kurla

We are delighted to donate an amount of Rs.2000/- as a thanksgiving for many favours and blessing received.

Agnelo D'souza, Vasai

This is my humble gift for the Balbhavan boys and Fr. Agnel Ashram - a donation of Rs.15000/- via EDC as I have received a lot of blessing through Ven. Fr. Agnel's prayers.

Joseph Anunciation Dcunha, Malad

An amount of Rs.5000/- via EDC has been donated for carrying out the charitable works at Fr. Agnel Ashram for the Balbhavan boys.

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY



Revon Agnelo D'silva	Mumbai	50000	Fitech Industries	Mumbai	2000	Sujata S. Matla	Mumbai	1000
Judie Regina	Chhattisgarh	30000	Ankit G Patel	Mumbai	2000	Rocky Shetty	Mumbai	1000
Arthur B. Rodrigues	Palghar	25000	Ghanshyam K. Patel	Mumbai	2000	Georgie K. George	Kerala	1000
Francis Ivan Creado	Mumbai	20000	Sangita G. Patel	Mumbai	2000	Jefferson A. Saldanha	Mumbai	1000
Gracy Nautiyal	Thane	20000	Jinal Patel	Mumbai	2000	Paul Menezes	Mumbai	1000
Dinaz H. Singh	Telangana	16000	Heather Hyrapiet.	Kolkata	2000	Lavina D'souza	Mumbai	1000
Susanna Menezes	Mumbai	15000	Carmelina Monteiro	Mumbai	2000	Vincent Lobo	Palghar	1000
Gulnar Katak	Mumbai	15000	Sanjeev Peter Kartan	Palghar	2000	Anthony Thomson	Kerala	1000
Preeti Rebello	Mumbai	15000	T A Anthony	Mumbai	2000	Owen Rodrigues	Karnataka	1000
Gnanashekaran P.	Mumbai	10000	Arjasp R. Elavia	Mumbai	2000	Bulbul Dutt	Kolkata	1000
David Mario Oliver	Mumbai	10000	Akshata Sonawane	Thane	2000	Irene Bhagat	USA	1000
Rajiv Parackal	Mumbai	10000	Neethu Vijayan	Kerala	2000	Harsh Rajendra Shukla	Mumbai	1000
Mathew J. D Souza	Palghar	10000	Sunita Sunil Sant	Panvel	2000	Anand Mukhtyar	Mumbai	1000
Melini Joseph D'souza	Mumbai	10000	Harold C. Mascarenhas	Mumbai	2000	Selvaraj G Mudliar	Mumbai	1000
Rajiv Parackal	Mumbai	10000	Isabel Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2000	Aryam Ishwar Attara	Mumbai	1000
Marie Shanti Lucien	Tamil Nadu	7500	Nikhil Pinto	Mumbai	2000	Abeline Francis Pereira	Kolhapur	1000
Eugene Joseph	Canada	7000	Kunal Pawar	Mumbai	2000	R.C. Pachikkara/N. Raj	Kerala	800
Warren J. Fernandes	Mumbai	6000	Angelina Rajesh	Mumbai	2000	Canute Dsouza	Tamil Nadu	600
Antoniarmal A.	Tamil Nadu	6000	Marian Fabian D'souza	Mumbai	1535	Magdaline Gupta	Mumbai	600
Sheela Morris Simon	Mumbai	5000	Dhruti Parikh	Mumbai	1501	Mahrugh Mistry	Nashik	501
Johnson Jeyaraj	Mumbai	5000	Mary Mina	Mumbai	1500	Bhupat M Chauhan	Thane	501
Andrew Lobo	Mumbai	5000	Ghanshyam K. Patel	Mumbai	1500	Akansha Dalwadi	Mumbai	501
Dr. Niket Shastri	Gujarat	5000	Charveek P. Shah	Mumbai	1500	Mathew Kurian.	Karnataka	501
John Robert Fernandes	Mumbai	5000	Nikhil Atram	Mumbai	1500	G. Veeramani	Tamil Nadu	501
Ashwin Macwan	Gujarat	5000	Siju Thengil	Mumbai	1313	Dhruv Desai	Mumbai	500
Margaret Cardoz	Mumbai	5000	Rabia J. Khan	Mumbai	1250	Nelson Jerome Vaz	Mumbai	500
Veena Albuquerque	Mumbai	5000	Shaun Roney Fernandes	Mumbai	1111	Mary Thomas	Mumbai	500
Jacob Francis	Kerala	5000	Rekha Sujan Singh	Pune	1100	I. Daniel Doraiswamy	Mumbai	500
Agnel Dias	Mumbai	5000	K., K., P. Bhesania	Mumbai	1001	Rupesh Banduk	Thane	500
Falguni Solanki	Mumbai	4300	Hareesh B Joshi	Mumbai	1001	Ashish Ohal	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	500
Novi Shetty	Mumbai	4000	Kimaya Subramaniam	Mumbai	1001	Vijaya Ohal	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	500
Brian Bramblebee	Mumbai	4000	Melvin Joseph	Karnataka	1000	Domnica D'costa.	Palghar	500
Malvika Bramblebee	Mumbai	4000	Johan Manohar	Mumbai	1000	Pranay, Priyansh Sapru	Palghar	500
Siara Bramblebee	Mumbai	4000	Flemy Thekketh	Kerala	1000	N. G Asher	Mumbai	500
John Bramblebee	Mumbai	4000	Elizabeth Fernandes	Mumbai	1000	Premila Sequiera	Gujarat	500
Netty Bramblebee	Mumbai	4000	Renila Wilson Kotwal	Palghar	1000	Peter Lopes	Palghar	500
Agnelo Coutinho	Palghar	4000	Trupti Gandhi	Mumbai	1000	Bibiana Noel Tusciano	Palghar	500
Madonna D. Lopes	Mumbai	4000	Molly K M	Kerala	1000	Jashwant Bhavsar	Mumbai	500
Blessy/Theo M. Parmar	Mumbai	3000	Jobi George	Kerala	1000	Priya Anshul D. Vora	Mumbai	500
Evangelisto C. D'Souza	Dubai	3000	Maria S. Arputharaj	Tamil Nadu	1000	Stacy Carvalho	Mumbai	500
Marlene Dias	Mumbai	3000	Darragh S. & Co.(India)	Kerala	1000	Dexter Ferrol D'mello	Thane	500
P. Sequeira	Palghar	2500	Cymon Joel Dunga	Uttan	1000	Shania S. Gonsalves	Mumbai	500
Fransquinha Fernandes	Mumbai	2500	Irani Shirin Namdar	Mumbai	1000	Rachel Agnel D'souza	Mumbai	500
Moses Medrol	Mumbai	2340	Gev K. Kelawalla	Mumbai	1000	Agnelo Lobo	Mumbai	500
Gavin Peter Fonseca	Mumbai	2000	Geet Pujara	Thane	1000	Geeta Benedict Pillai	Gujarat	500
Christopher R. D'mello	Palghar	2000	Cynthia Miranda	Mumbai	1000	Jessie D'silva	Karnataka	500
Alok Rakshit	Mumbai	2000	Fatima Moris Rodrigues	Palghar	1000	Valsa Paul	Kerala	500
Armaity Gev Kelawalla	Mumbai	2000	Santosh Vithal Mohite	Pune	1000	Neela Macwan	Gujarat	500
Priime Maark	Mumbai	2000	Agnelo Mathew	Mumbai	1000	Vinay A Limbachiya	Mumbai	500
Tushar K. Shah	Mumbai	2000	Philomena Brahmane	Mumbai	1000	Dean M. Gonsalves	Palghar	500

FR. AGNEL'S CHAMPION CUP 3.0

A Celebration of Football, Talent
& Sportsmanship:

17th - 23rd August 2026,
Fr. Agnel Balbhawan.



Fr. Agnel Balbhawan successfully hosted the Fr. Agnel Champions Cup 3.0 from 17th to 23rd August 2026. Organised under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Jovito, Tournament Director, and Mr. Kartik Sahu, Organising Secretary, with the support of the Super Seniors of Balbhawan, the tournament witnessed an impressive participation of 86 teams from across India.

The tournament was formally inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Bento, Director of the Institute, along with Rev. Fr. Jovito, Assistant Director. From 17th to 20th August, the Interschool Tournament featured Under-14 Girls, Under-15 Boys and Under-18 Boys. Aster Noida Extension won the U-14 Girls category, while Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida emerged champions in both U-15 Boys and U-18 Boys. Jiya, Yuvi and Aditya were honoured with the respective Best Player Awards.

Each interschool champion received a cash prize of ₹6,000 along with a trophy, medals and certificates, while the runners-up received ₹3,000 along with trophies, medals and certificates. The interschool finals were graced by Chief Guest Mr. Saji K. Philip, along with Rev. Fr. Bento and Rev. Fr. Jovito.

The Open and 40+ Categories were conducted from 22nd to 23rd August, attracting players from different parts of





India. Ancient FC emerged as the Open Category champions, with Rohini FC as runners-up. Obina of Ancient FC received the Best Player Award. Ancient FC received a cash prize of ₹25,000, trophy and medals, while Rohini FC received ₹15,000, trophy and medals.

The newly introduced 40+ Category added a unique dimension to the tournament. Football Freaks emerged champions, while Meerut FC finished runners-up. Rahul Pandita of Football Freaks was honoured as the Best Player. The champions received ₹12,000 along with a trophy and medals, while the runners-up received ₹6,000 along with a trophy and medals. The final prize distribution ceremony was graced by Chief Guest Rev. Fr. Roy, in the presence of Rev. Fr. Bento and Rev. Fr. Jovito.

As the final whistle was blown on 23rd August 2026, the Fr. Agnel Champions Cup 3.0 concluded successfully. With 86 teams, multiple age categories, attractive cash prizes and individual awards, the tournament became a memorable celebration of football, bringing together young talents, experienced players, schools and clubs.

The success of the Champions Cup was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the organisers, staff, volunteers and Super Seniors of Balbhawan, reflecting teamwork, discipline, sportsmanship and excellence.

CRCE

BANDRA

CONCEICAO RODRIGUES MEMORIAL DEBATE

VEILED ARBITERS – POWER WITHOUT THRONES

When ideas took the floor and
unseen power came under scrutiny.

32
Teams

31
Colleges

2
Days

1
powerful
question: who really
holds power?



When Power Has No Throne

On 21 and 22 August 2026, Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, became a meeting ground for ideas, arguments and questions that rarely have simple answers. The 28th edition of the Conceicao Rodrigues Memorial Debate (CRMD) brought together 32 teams from 32 colleges for two days of rigorous intellectual engagement.

This year's theme, "Veiled Arbiters: Power Without Thrones," was deliberately provocative. It asked participants to look beyond familiar symbols of authority and examine the less visible forces shaping contemporary life—corporations, media networks, algorithms, financial systems, information control and ideology. The central challenge was not merely to ask who has power, but where power resides, how it operates and whether it remains accountable.

"The real debate was not simply about power—it was about visibility, influence and accountability."

From Preparation to Performance

The journey began well before the first speaker took the floor. Preparations commenced on 20 May, with the Students' Council and organising team working through outreach, sponsorship, hospitality, accommodation, transportation, publicity and venue planning. Internal rounds held on 23 July selected the college team, while a Nukkad Natak on 14 August added an energetic buzz across the campus.

A Format Built for Thinking on One's Feet

CRMD followed an intermediate Oxford-style format, with two teams of two members each—one representing the proposition and the other the opposition. Opening speeches were followed by refutation and concluding speeches. Across the League Rounds, Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals and Final, participants were tested on what they knew and also on how effectively they could listen, respond, reorganise an argument and work with a partner.

The League and Quarter-Final rounds used four-minute opening and closing speeches with a ten-minute refutation round. The Semi-Finals

extended the speeches to five minutes and refutation to fifteen minutes, while the Final allowed a twenty-minute refutation. Judges assessed analytical depth, confidence, engagement with the opposition, organisation, argumentation and teamwork.

Day One:

The Campus Comes Alive

The competition opened at Samvaad with an inauguration ceremony. Rev. Father Valerian D'Souza formally declared CRMD 2026 open, followed by a theme address and an explanation of the debate format. The League Rounds then unfolded simultaneously across eight venues on the fourth and fifth floors of the college.

The motions took participants through questions of personalised political information, data concentration, recommendation algorithms and private power.

Day Two:

From Democracy to Global Influence

The second day raised the stakes. The Quarter-Finals examined whether unaccountable power poses a greater threat to democracy than elected power. The Semi-Finals turned to the media, asking whether concentrated private control poses a greater threat than state censorship.

Then came the Final at Samvaad. The two strongest teams confronted a question at the heart of the theme: whether, in the 21st century, economic dependence has become a more powerful source of international influence than military force. The debate brought the competition's central ideas—power, influence, dependence and authority—into sharp focus.

Beyond Competition: A Culture of Dialogue

A debate of this scale is measured not only by who wins, but also by what it makes possible. CRMD created a space where disagreement was not a barrier to dialogue; it was the very basis of it. Students were required to defend positions, challenge assumptions



and engage with opposing viewpoints without losing sight of reasoned argument.

That spirit was visible across the venues. In classrooms and laboratories, teams listened, challenged and reframed their arguments under time pressure. The atmosphere was competitive, but the intellectual objective was larger: to cultivate young people who can think critically, communicate precisely and disagree constructively.

The People Behind the Podium

The success of CRMD was also a story of student leadership. The Students' Council and organising committee coordinated participant communication, sponsorship, publicity, hospitality, accommodation, transportation, venue management, adjudication support and time management under the guidance of Prof. Sangita Pashonikar and led by the Dean of Students' welfare Dr. Joseph Rodrigues.

The organising team also had to respond quickly when teams withdrew at the last moment and when a technical issue arose during communication of the Semi-Final motion. Neither challenge disrupted the larger flow of the competition. The experience demonstrated a lesson that applies far beyond debating: successful leadership is often the ability to adapt calmly when the plan changes.

Celebrating Excellence

After two days of intense competition, the Grand Finale concluded with the recognition of outstanding debating talent. CRMD22 from St. Xavier's College, Fort, represented by Shaurya Sawant and Ashmit Gogoi, emerged as the Winners, while CRMD02 from Vivekanand College, represented by Keshavrai Kulkarni and Shivansh Sinha, secured the Runners-Up position. Shivansh Sinha was further honoured as the Best Speaker, recognising his exceptional clarity, argumentation and ability to engage with the opposing side. The distinction of Best Adjudicator was awarded to Eram Saiyed. These accolades reflected the high standard of research, reasoning and articulation demonstrated throughout CRMD 2026.

The Grand Finale was graced by Chief Guest Ms. Daivata Patil and Guest of Honour Ms. Chirantana Bhatt. The Final was adjudicated by Dr. Madhavi Gokhale, Mr. Aaditya Jadhav and Ms. Vidya Tevani, bringing the competition to a close with the same fairness that characterised the earlier rounds.

More Than a Debate

CRMD 2026 also reflected the educational mission of the institution. It contributed to SDG 4—Quality Education through experiential learning and the development of critical thinking, communication, research and analytical skills. It supported SDG 5 and SDG 10 by creating an inclusive platform for students from diverse institutions, and SDG 16 by encouraging respectful disagreement, civic awareness and peaceful dialogue. The collaborative effort of students, faculty, adjudicators, sponsors, volunteers and external stakeholders also echoed SDG 17—Partnerships for the Goals.

CRMD 2026 reminded us that the most powerful voice is not always the loudest one—it is the one that can make us think.

A Legacy That Continues

From months of preparation to the final exchange at Samvaad, CRMD 2026 was a celebration of intellectual curiosity, articulate expression and meaningful dialogue. Its 32 participating colleges, demanding motions, strong adjudication and student-led execution made the 28th edition a significant and memorable milestone in the intellectual and cultural journey of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering.

The theme may have asked where power hides, but the event itself offered a clear answer about where possibility lives: in young minds willing to question, listen, reason and speak. For two memorable days, the college did not simply host a debate. It hosted a conversation about the world—and invited the next generation to shape it.

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8th September
Happy Feast of the
Nativity of
*BLESSED
MOTHER
MARY*

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the Birthday of
Holy Mother Mary
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Family
be Blessed with
Hope, Joy,
Prosperity
& Love.



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