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FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

JULY 2026

*Preserve nature
for future generations*



World Nature Conservation Day

JULY 2026

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The Call of the Spirit received by our Founders in 1939, and its significance to us 87 years later!

(The views expressed here are the personal views of the author. Publishers)

(This is a historic-canonical study, seeking to throw light on this important topic. Salva melior opinio - Author)

The birth of the present Society of the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier owes its existence to the Call of the Spirit to two young men, students of Priesthood in 1931 and 1934, independently of each other. They received an inspiration that had placed upon their weak shoulders the task of establishing a Missionary Society, that would be different, because its objectives, its membership and its ambit was only India. They summed up that Call, in a manner that they understood it, as 'to give Christ to India, and India to Christ.' It may appear that this call was similar to those of others who have established missionary societies, to preach the Gospel, but the similarity ends there, as St. Paul states the Spirit calls and He gives his diverse gifts to diverse recipients, freely for His own purpose (I Cor. 12, 4-11). There is no doubt that after St. Thomas the Apostle of India, in the first century, most of the other seeds of the Good News were spread by Missionaries from all over the world. The Call that came to the two young students Conceicao and Francisco, was different. Their Call to spread the Good News, was such that demanded from them a new perspective that the Popes from Leo XIII to Benedict XV, had been urging, that the Gospel message must be carried out in India, not as foreigners did, but by their fellow Indians, in a manner that their compatriots understand and accept.

The Call and the Response

The significance of the Call was welling up in their minds and hearts, as an objective that had to be attained at all costs. The urgency and the excitement that the two young students were filled with, soon spread to the other seminarians who formed themselves into prayer groups to pray for the spread of the Gospel, under the leadership of Conceicao and Francisco. In order to further deepen their interest in their Call, they also formed a thinking and discussion group, known as 'Academia' (discussion forum) to discuss the philosophical and theological impact of the Call of

the Spirit. Soon, through serious discussion and reflection, they drew out a plan of action, laying down in simple terms the contours of the new missionary Society and called it 'Liga Xaveriana', (*Xavier's group*), which worked on the 'project' of the 'missionary society'. As good seminarians they shared their experience of the Call with their spiritual director who advised them to pray and present their plan to the Patriarch, who showed interest in their idea and its purpose.

By 1935, they had already gathered 21 members, ordained priests as well as seminarians who under the leadership of Conceicao Rodrigues, now already a priest, formally presented their plan to the Patriarch of Goa. Although a spiritually sound and challenging idea, given the fact that the Archdiocese of Goa, was a Portuguese colony, where they ruled with iron hand, even the utterance of the word 'India' was seen as contrary to Goa's security, their plan was bound to be seen with suspicion and could be snuffed out. They chose to walk that path, in spite of the inherent perils involved.

The tortuous journey

The Patriarch, a very committed man of God, appreciated the idea of a new Missionary society and proposed that instead of a new society, they would rather revive the moribund Society of the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier (SFX), which by that time had only two or three surviving members, one its superior, ailing and residing at home (died in 1936) and the other Fr. Remedios Gomes, who was not even residing in Pilar.

How could they forget the call of the Spirit, and accede to the call of the Patriarch. They were placed in a dilemma, such as Peter and John were placed. In Act 4,18 and again in 5.12, they were ordered by the Sanhedrin, the highest spiritual authority to give up preaching in the name of Jesus or else face punishment, but could they, without reneging on the Call of Jesus? That could simply not be done. Could those who had received the Call of the Spirit

give in to the Patriarch, and betray the Spirit? They humbly but firmly resisted, and Fr. Conceicao with great humility wrote to the Patriarch, that his proposal could not be accepted, but instead of giving them the answer that Peter and Paul had given, *“which is greater right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard”*, they pointed out that what the Patriarch was suggesting was neither physically nor legally possible.

“As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard”

Fr. Conceicao on behalf of others, pointed out the contradictions existing in the proposition that the Patriarch had given. They stated that the proposal was antithetical to their purpose, because their ambit was way bigger than that of being diocesan priests under the Patriarch, but most significantly, contrary to the provisions of the Canon Law. They pointed out that the SFX did not exist as a Society because its many provisions, including that of the Superior General being for life, were absolutely in violation of the Canon Law, and the new Canon Law promulgated in 1917-18, by the provisions of Canon 5, had already declared all religious groups existent in the church but not compliant with the Canon Law, as null and void. The real reason why Fr. Conceicao and his companions were not willing to agree to the Patriarch's proposal was because that association allowed the Patriarch to completely control them and if they had accepted, they would not be able to follow the Call of the Spirit, their Charism!

The Patriarch who was quite knowledgeable could not and certainly did not ask them to join the old Society since that was legally not possible. His proposition was rather that they continue the work that the old society was doing. That would keep the work of the Society alive, although not the society itself. It is gratuitous to assume that the Patriarch did not know that the old society was no longer existent canonically, and that he wanted them to revive it. He wanted to continue the work the old society was doing, by being as his service in the Archdiocese. His other difficulty was that he could not allow the proposal of the new society even if he had wanted to, because in 1900 the Holy See

(Conditae a Christo) had placed a ban on new societies, without the prior permission of the Holy Father, which was relaxed only in 1937, for missionary lands. So, the effort of the Patriarch was to urge them to join the old Association, which did not require the Holy See's approval.

Frs. Conceicao and Francisco understood the difficulty that the Patriarch had, and decided to stay low, between 1935-1938, and when the opportunity arose, after the Holy See had lifted the ban in 1937, allowing the establishment of new societies in missionary lands, and after having gathered a new group of priests and lay people, once again approached the Patriarch with a proposal that he simply could not refuse. They requested the Patriarch to permit the only surviving member of the old Society, Fr. Remedios Gomes who had agreed to join them, to be the Superior of the new Society, and also sought permission to have Fr. Manuel Jose Barreto, a professor of the Seminary, to be their Novice Master. The other issue of naming the society by the old name, suited them perfectly, as their Call had an intimate connection with St. Francis Xavier, at whose relics they had received it. It made perfect sense to both the Patriarch and the Founders of the new Society. So, the solution that the Founders suggested to the Patriarch, helped safeguard three important things:

- (i) **Allow the Founders to follow the Call of the Spirit and establish a new missionary society,**
- (ii) Allow the Patriarch to revive the name (not the Society) of the old Society, SFX, and finally
- (iii) **A NEW MISSIONARY SOCIETY, that India was waiting for!**

Whatever one may say, we cannot even remotely venture to think that the Patriarch through his note on the approval document, 'continuadora.....' would want to deny the exercise of the Call of the Spirit to the Founders of 1939, Rev. Frs. Conceicao Rodrigues and Francisco Jasso Sequeira, neither that he would consider a society (old SFX) that was legally and physically extinct, as canonically existent. The Patriarch had already addressed the issue, after the Holy See in 'Conditae a Christo' had demanded that Bishops should define what type of religious societies existed in their dioceses. It

further stated that if the Societies were approved the Bishop could not intervene in their affair (*By the issue of a new Regulamento in 1909, he had already made it very clear, that the old Society was merely an association of diocesan priests, and not even a diocesan society in the canonical sense*). Therefore, both by reason of fact and the law, his note is only a statement of the chronological continuity of the Society of the same name.

Even if we were to consider that the Patriarch in his ignorance considered that the old society was existent, his note on the approval document could not revive it. The only grey area that ever existed in anyone's mind about the authenticity of a new Society in 1939, could arise from the doubt that one could harbour about the true existence of the Call of the Spirit to Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues and Fr. Francisco Jasso Sequeira.

That issue was finally and categorically resolved by the document proposed to the General Chapter by the Holy See, through its officially appointed Facilitator, and unanimously adopted by the General Chapter in 2022, that clearly and unambiguously stated that “Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues and Fr. Francisco Jasso Sequeira, received the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.” With that declaration of the Holy See, we have reached the end of uncertainty – ***Against a genuine Call of the Spirit, no human dispensation stands.***

The contextual relevance of the Call of the Spirit.

The core message of Jesus, God made man who was born and lived as one of us, was the proclamation of liberty from the slavery of sin, and all forms of oppression, such as the colonial rule that denies man the freedom from self-rule, ignorance, poverty and despair. India's freedom struggle was the perfect setting for a new missionary society, that God in his wisdom inspired the two young men to establish. In their first public utterance and a publication as well as a Radio address, in 1940, rightly titled ‘Nova Orientacao Missionaria’ (new missionary orientation), Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues made a fundamentally different and powerful public statement that cost him the exile from his native land. He said that time had come to understand, accept and adopt the diversity of cultures as part of the faith that makes us what we are. Of course, no one could have made such a

statement eight decades ago, when the general understanding was that our faith needed to be wrapped in western created categories and symbolism, unless he was inspired and courageous.

That was our contextual cultural servitude, unintended but fundamentally contrary to the Universal message of the Gospel, which although experienced in a local context was devoid of ethnic, geographical, racial and social qualifications. The stand of the new Founders of 1939, expressed by Fr. C. Rodrigues was diametrically contrary to the political and religious context not only of 1887 (the old Society) but was futuristic even in the context of 1939, where generally our faith, except in some parts of Kerala where the oriental rights were followed, was generally strapped to the western symbolism of language and thought processes. Fortunately, Fr. Conceicao was not alone, because in 1921, the Holy See in a letter to Apostolic Delegate Petrus Pisani urged him to exhort the Indian clergy not to follow what the foreign missionaries did, but learn to live and convey the Gospel in a way that our (Indians) fellows know, live and understand.

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A Letter from Nature...

- Tancia Pires

Dear Human,
Do you recognize me?

Not the photographs on your phone, not the wallpapers on your computer, not the documentaries you watch on TV. I mean *me*, the living, breathing world. I may be looking a little shackled or shattered, but when you look around can you still recognise the sustained bits and pieces of me?

Your grandparents knew me well. They woke to the crowing of roosters and the songs of birds. They read the seasons in the winds and clouds. They walked beneath tree-capped roads, rested by the serene seashores, and watched fireflies illuminate warm summer nights. Children climbed mango trees, chased butterflies across fields, and returned home with muddy feet and stories to tell.

I was not a destination then. I was home.

I have watched your world grow louder while mine grows quieter.

Listen carefully.

Can you hear the deafening silence where birds once sang?
Can you hear the stillness where insects once hummed?
Can you hear the absence of frogs after the rains, of streams that once danced over stones, of forests that whispered with life?
The insects that crawled up barks?

The silence did not arrive all at once.

It crept in gradually, unnoticed amid the noise of progress. A tree cut here, a wetland filled there, a river polluted elsewhere. Small losses accumulated until entire ecosystems began to fade. Yet I do not write to accuse you. I write to remind you. You often speak of "saving nature," as though I depend entirely upon your generosity. But the truth is far older and far humbler. I existed before you. I have endured ice ages, volcanic eruptions, shifting continents, and countless extinctions. Long after the mightiest civilizations became dust, forests reclaimed their ruins and rivers reshaped the land.

If humanity vanished tomorrow, I would eventually heal. But if I continue to vanish from your lives, can humanity truly flourish? The air you breathe, the water you drink, the food on your table, the climate that sustains your communities, these are not products of human invention. They are gifts you receive every day, often without notice. You do not stand apart from me. You are part of me. Every breath is a reminder of that truth.

But, I see that you do not realise that fact, you've been recklessly building and constructing endlessly as if space here is infinite. You consume as though resources are inexhaustible, discard as though there is no tomorrow, and pursue convenience without pausing to consider its cost and adversity. And despite everything, I remain hopeful.

Hope lives in the young volunteer cleaning a beach, in the farmer restoring depleted soil, in communities protecting local forests, in every child who yearns to play in the soil or at the playground instead of merely scrolling through their phones. Most of all, hope lives in your ability to choose differently.

The story is not yet finished. The forests can grow again. The rivers can run clear again. The birds can return. The silence can be broken. But only if

you remember that conservation is not about preserving a distant wilderness. It is about protecting the very foundation of life itself.

I'm writing to you to remind you of all the adversities you'd be facing if you kept ignoring the signs and symptoms of my depletion that would affect the generations to come. I am hopeful, that you're knowledgeable, able-minded and you'd do the best to conserve me, because you know you need me, and not vice-versa. So, on this **World**

Nature Conservation Day, do not merely celebrate me. Rediscover me. Walk among the trees. Listen to the birds. Feel the soil. Teach your children my language. And when they are old enough to tell their own stories, let them speak not of what was lost, but of what was saved.

With patience, resilience, and hope,

Yours Truly,

Nature



Hailing from Goa, **Tancia Pires** is a PhD scholar, researching advanced neuroimaging. Passionate about science, culture, language, and faith, she enjoys translating complex ideas into engaging narratives for diverse audiences. Beyond academia, she is an author, and is actively involved in public speaking, hosting, and stage performances.

God is not looking for perfect Christians

- Severina Peres

The Feast of St. Thomas is on 3rd July, celebrated as Faith Formation Day in some places.

Along the coast of the Bay of Bengal at Santhome in Mylapore, Chennai, is situated the National Shrine, Cathedral and Basilica of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus. The tomb of St. Thomas is at the very centre of this lovely Gothic Church, an architectural treasure. St. Thomas, referred to as Didymus (Gk) meaning twin, is one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. He was hand picked by Jesus to be his disciple: Thomas experienced first hand the company of Jesus, following Jesus closely during his ministry. On one occasion after the death of Lazarus, the Gospel of St. John records that though the other apostles did not wish to go back with Jesus to Judea, Thomas' profound trust and courage beckoned the others when he said to them, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

After the Resurrection of Jesus, the Apostle Thomas gives in to doubts and skepticism when the Risen Jesus appears to the other ten Apostles on the day Thomas was missing in the place. Thomas says his belief in Jesus is conditional: until he could see and feel Jesus' crucifixion wounds himself.

Thomas was an eyewitness to Jesus' crucifixion and death, but now he insists that he has to see the same marks of the crucifixion on the Risen Jesus to reiterate his belief. This moment comes when Jesus appears again and invites Thomas to put his finger in the nail holes and his hand into the Lord's wounded side.

Late Pope Francis illuminates our understanding: "Jesus does not give up, he does not get tired of us, he is not afraid of our crises, our weaknesses. He always comes back: When the doors are closed, he comes back; when we are in doubt, he comes back; when, like Thomas, we need to encounter him and to touch him up close, he comes back."

The Lord comes to us with His reassuring Presence, saying to us, **"DOUBT NO LONGER BUT BELIEVE."** Pope Francis continues: "By telling us the story of St. Thomas' doubt, the Gospels want to tell us that **God is not looking for perfect Christians. It is better to have an imperfect but humble faith that always returns to Jesus**" (Reflection on Divine Mercy Sunday 2022).

St. Thomas remained away when the Risen Jesus came to show Himself to him. For the sake of St. Thomas, the merciful Lord came again. Pope

Francis encourages us: **"Jesus is the God of other chances."** Chances one must not overlook for Jesus comes to show us His wounds to heal us.

After this encounter of touching the wounds of the Risen Lord, St. Thomas rises from his weakness and doubt to embark with renewed faith with his exclamation: **"My Lord and My God."** His faith journey leads him to India in the year 52 AD at the Malabar Coast where he travels extensively for 17 years, working numerous miracles.

A huge log of wood got washed ashore near Santhome, unmovable even by elephants. St. Thomas used his girdle and pulled it out. The king of Mylapore was touched that he donated the huge log of wood to St. Thomas, who built a small chapel with it.

As persecution increased, St. Thomas took shelter in a cave at Little Mount which is about four miles away from Santhome. St. Thomas died a martyr in 72 AD after he was pierced with a spear while praying in front of the cross. Even today, pilgrims are moved by the Bleeding Cross, which is believed to be carved by him.

After his death, his body was buried in the Church built by him. A pot containing earth, probably moistured by his blood and the lance with which he was pierced were both buried in his tomb. In the 10th century AD, Christians from Persia built a Church and tomb over the burial site of St. Thomas which been opened four times so far, the first time of its opening, the son of the Raja Mahadevan got healed from his ailment.

My faith is rekindled and my spirit is refreshed whenever I visit and pray at the tomb of St. Thomas, the majestic Basilica Cathedral church and adjacent museum which the spear which killed St. Thomas is displayed; I pray for courage and zeal – virtues which were exemplary in St. Thomas, culminating in thousands being touched by his faith and perseverance. Even today, pilgrims throng Santhome round the year to seek the intercession of the Saint.



Severina Peres enjoys writing on Faith and Catholic doctrine. Her articles appear in the digital and print media regularly.

STILL VERY INFLUENTIAL SAINTS: IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

-Dr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

The Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola is celebrated annually on July 31.

As he lay on his supposed deathbed on a battlefield in 1521, it would be hard to believe that **Ignatius of Loyola would become, in 1539, the founder of the Society of Jesus.** A rash, worldly and contentious young officer in the Spanish army, he paid little attention to matters of faith.

It wasn't until he was struck with a cannon ball and told to prepare for death that Ignatius began his turn to God.

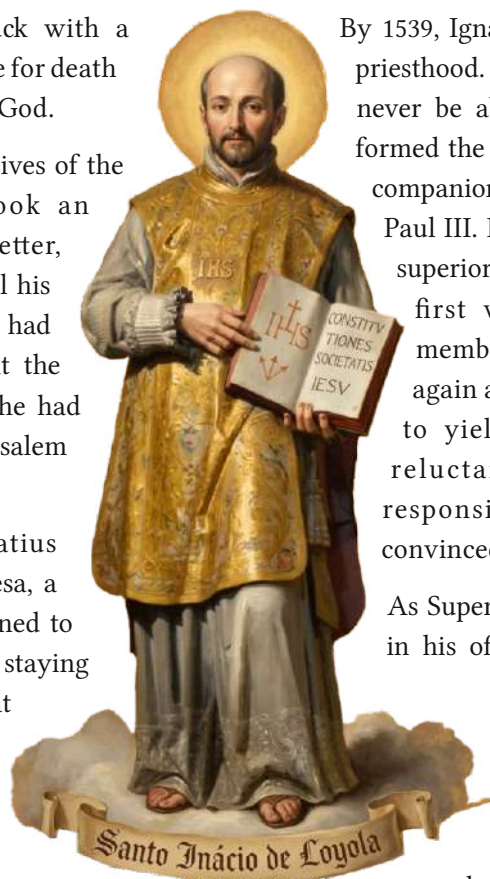
Left with only a book on the lives of the saints after his health took an unexpected turn for the better, Ignatius was inspired to model his life after theirs. By the time he had fully healed (though he spent the rest of his life with a limp), he had decided he wanted to go to Jerusalem and live where Jesus had.

Along his pilgrimage, Ignatius stopped in a cave near Manresa, a town in Spain, where he planned to spend a few days, but ended up staying for 10 months. It was here that Ignatius had a vision, which he never revealed, that led him to see God in all things. Here, he also undertook penances and fasts, trying to imitate (and even outdo) those of the saints. This extreme fasting would permanently damage his stomach. After passing through Barcelona and Rome, Ignatius eventually arrived in the Holy Land only to be immediately sent away because the Turk-ruled Jerusalem was too dangerous for Catholics. Over the next several years, he studied in various European schools and universities, though his desire to go to the Holy Land never dwindled.

While at the University of Paris, he met and began to influence Francis Xavier, Peter Faber and a few other students, directing them all through what is known today as the *Spiritual Exercises*. Together, Ignatius and six fellow students decided that if they couldn't go to the Holy Land, they would travel to Rome and put themselves at the disposal of the pope.

By 1539, Ignatius had been ordained to the priesthood. Realizing that it was likely he'd never be able to travel to Jerusalem, he formed the Society of Jesus with six of his companions, with the approval of Pope Paul III. He was unanimously voted the superior of the Society - twice. After the first vote, he begged his fellow members to pray, reconsider and vote again after a few days. They did, only to yield the same result. Though reluctant, Ignatius accepted the responsibility when his confessor convinced him it was God's will.

As Superior General, Ignatius remained in his office in Rome, though his real passion was to teach children and direct adults through the *Spiritual Exercises*. Over the next 15 years, he wrote almost 7,000 letters to colleagues in the Jesuit order, which by the time of his death had grown to include 1,000 members. The worldwide number today is about 15,000 men, besides many thousands of popes, bishops, clergy, religious men and women, and lay people who have embraced Ignatian spirituality and distinguished themselves by their work, living holy and fruitful lives like their founder. The defining feature of the Society of Jesus is commitment to the Holy Father to work for the good of the Church.



On July 31, 1556, at the age of 65, Ignatius died after an increasingly taxing struggle with the stomach problems he had developed when he was younger. He was canonized by Pope Gregory XV on March 12, 1622, together with St. Francis Xavier.

Though often portrayed as a stern, unemotional soldier, Ignatius was known among the members of the Society as a loving superior. One of Ignatius' closest companions, Luis Goncalves de Camara, wrote, "*He was always rather inclined towards love; moreover, he seemed all love, and because of that he was universally loved by all. There was no one in the Society who did not have great love for him and did not consider himself much loved by him.*"

St. Ignatius of Loyola continues to exercise a phenomenal influence on the world and the Catholic Church. His book '*The Spiritual Exercises*' underlines discernment as the singular essence of the charism of the spirituality of the religious Society of Jesus. The members of the Jesuit Family, so far over 200,000 priests and brothers who belonged to this religious Society, have lived according to this spirituality.

In the contemporary context, the teachings of St. Ignatius hold particular relevance. His emphasis on openness to the promptings of God's Spirit in the practice of discernment align perfectly with the aspirations of a "Synodal Church of Communion, Participation, and Mission." Pope Francis, in guiding the Synod, underscored three vital verbs - "encounter, listen, and discern" - to create a journey of spiritual discernment guided by the Spirit of God.

The Catholic Church faces significant challenges in the present age. Millions of baptized Catholics in the West and East are drifting away from the Church and, in some cases, losing faith in a loving God. The reasons range from perceiving religion as ritualistic and mechanical to reacting to the Church's internal scandals or the secular world's disdain for the sacred. In these troubled times, St. Ignatius stands as an inspiring model and teacher for today's Third Millennium

followers of Jesus Christ, offering profound insights to address these challenges.

A personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ the Saviour, rather than superficial intellectual knowledge, is what St. Ignatius envisions for all believers. The result has been a growing number of individuals who have embraced this spirituality, contributing to the rich legacy of Ignatian spirituality.

Notable figures like **Francis Xavier, Mateo Ricci, Peter Canisius, Robert Bellarmine, Teilhard de Chardin, Karl Rahner, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Pedro Arrupe** and **Pope Francis** have exemplified this spirituality, serving the Church and humanity in various capacities. St. Ignatius of Loyola's profound influence on the Catholic Church and the world continues unabated. As the Church faces contemporary challenges and people seek transformative faith experiences, his call to cultivate a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ stands out as a powerful solution.

In a world that craves fulfilment and freedom, St. Ignatius' teachings and writings continue to inspire countless individuals to do "more" (*magis*) in their devotion to Jesus Christ, seeking to serve others and promote the greater glory of God, and to thus bring about more rapid and effective responses to the world's needs.



Fr. Fiorello Mascarenhas has been a Jesuit for 63 years and a priest for 51 years. He earned a Doctorate in Biblical Spirituality from Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, and is well known as an author and popular retreat preacher. He can be contacted at frfiomas@gmail.com

Parents' Day: A Tribute to the Sacred Role of Parents

- Jubel D'Cruz

National Parents' Day, celebrated on July 26, the fourth Sunday in July, is a beautiful occasion dedicated to honouring fathers and mothers and recognising the vital role they play in the lives of their children. For Christians, however, this day carries a far deeper spiritual significance. Parenthood is not merely a social responsibility but a sacred vocation entrusted by God Himself.

In the Christian vision, the family is the “domestic Church,” the first and most important place where faith, love, and virtue are nurtured. Within the home, children learn their earliest lessons - not only how to speak and act, but how to pray, forgive, love, and trust in God. Parents, therefore, are far more than caregivers; they are co-workers with God, guiding their children along the path of faith and righteousness while preparing them for life in the world.

Sacred Scripture and Christian tradition offer us powerful models of holy parenthood. At the heart of this reflection stands the Holy Family - Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Blessed Virgin Mary embodies humility, obedience, and complete surrender to God's will, while Saint

Joseph reflects quiet strength, responsibility, and unwavering faith. Together, they created a home filled with love, discipline, and reverence, nurturing Jesus in wisdom and grace.

We are also inspired by Saints Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary, whose faithful upbringing prepared her to respond wholeheartedly to God's call. Their lives remind us that the influence of parents begins long before a child fully understands it. Through prayer, sacrifice, and loving guidance, parents shape the soul and character of their children in profound and lasting ways.

In our own lives, parents are truly a precious gift. They bring us into the world, nurture us with care, and often sacrifice their own comfort and desires for our well-being. They teach us right from wrong, support us through life's struggles, and rejoice in our successes. In their love, we experience a reflection of God's own unconditional love.

Parents are also a child's first and most influential teachers. Long before formal education begins, they lay the foundation for learning, behaviour, discipline, and emotional development. Through everyday interactions - through words, actions, and personal example - they create a secure environment where children can grow, explore, and flourish.

The education of a child does not begin and end in the classroom; it begins at home, under the guiding hands and watchful eyes of parents. While schools provide structured learning and teachers illuminate the paths of knowledge, it is within the family that character is shaped, values are instilled, and habits of discipline and curiosity are nurtured. The role of parents in a child's education is not secondary but foundational, not optional but essential.

Every child's first teacher is a parent. From the earliest days of life, children learn to speak, behave, and dream through the examples set by their families. A parent's encouragement to read, insistence on discipline, guidance in moral

choices, and support in studies create a framework of confidence and responsibility that carries the child through school and beyond. When parents show interest in homework, provide a quiet space for study, and celebrate achievements, they plant seeds of motivation that no textbook alone can provide.

In today's world, where distractions are abundant and the pressures of technology weigh heavily on young minds, the presence of parents in education at home has become more critical than ever. Without parental guidance, children can easily fall into habits that hinder growth and learning. But when parents step in as mentors - encouraging reading, instilling time management, limiting distractions, and discussing ideas - children begin to understand that learning is not a burden but a path to growth and fulfilment.



Beyond academics, parents shape the values that define a child's future. Honesty, kindness, respect, compassion, and responsibility cannot be learned solely from books; they must be lived and witnessed within the family environment. The home thus becomes the first classroom of life, and parents become role models whose actions often teach more powerfully than words. A father who values integrity inspires integrity in his child; a mother who lives with discipline and compassion teaches lessons that remain for a lifetime.

The partnership between home and school must therefore remain strong and harmonious. Teachers can achieve lasting success only when parents extend the lessons of the classroom into the daily lives of their children. Regular communication with schools, support for teachers' efforts, and active involvement in a child's progress ensure that education becomes complete and meaningful.

A society that overlooks the role of parents risks raising a generation disconnected from values, discipline, and responsibility. But a society that encourages and strengthens parents in their mission creates children who are confident, balanced, compassionate, and capable of contributing positively to the future. The destiny of children - and indeed the destiny of nations - is first shaped in the lessons learned at home.

Yet, in the busyness of life, gratitude is often left unspoken. Parents' Day offers us a meaningful opportunity to pause and acknowledge all that our parents have done for us. Simple gestures - a kind word, a heartfelt message, time spent together, or a sincere prayer - can bring immense joy and comfort to their hearts.

The Fourth Commandment, "Honour your father and your mother," calls us to more than childhood obedience. It invites us to a lifelong attitude of respect, gratitude, and care. To honour our parents is to recognise their dignity, appreciate their sacrifices, and stand by them, especially as they grow older.

Not everyone is blessed with the presence of their parents, which makes it all the more important to cherish them while we can. There is a unique joy in bringing a smile to their faces and assuring them that their love and sacrifices have not gone unnoticed. After all, where would we be without those who loved us even before we were born and continue to care for us throughout our lives?

Though Mother's Day and Father's Day have been celebrated for more than a century, National Parents' Day was established in 1994, to recognise and uplift the role of parents in raising and guiding their children. It is therefore not merely a celebration but a reminder of the enduring value of family in society.

As we observe Parents' Day this year, let us thank God for the gift of our parents and remember them in our prayers. May we draw inspiration from the Holy Family and from Saints Joachim and Anne, striving to build families rooted in faith, love, mutual respect, and moral responsibility.

Above all, let us remember that gratitude is not meant for a single day. It is a way of life. Through our words, our actions, and our prayers, may we continually express our love and appreciation for those who have given us life, shaped our character, guided our education, and led us toward the fullness of life.



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

READER'S FEEDBACK

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

This magazine is available online.

Visit us at www.agnelashram.org

Empowering Educators for a Today's Changing World: Fr. Agnel Faculty Welcomes the New Academic Year!

Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School and Junior College, Ambernath, recently hosted an inspiring Staff Orientation Programme to kickstart the new academic year on 13th June 2026. The intensive workshop gave teachers powerful new tools for modern classrooms.

An Elite Expert Leads the Faculty: Ms. Karuna Chavan brought a wealth of knowledge to the school. She is a proud graduate of IIT Bombay and TISS Mumbai. As a top corporate trainer and coach, she knows exactly how to help people grow. She used her deep experience to show teachers how to thrive in today's fast-changing world.



Ms. Karuna Chavan empowering educators.

Mastering the "VUCA" World: The session took a close look at our modern "VUCA" world. This stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. Ms. Karuna explained that classrooms are no longer fixed or predictable. Instead, technology and student needs shift every single day.

To win in this digital era, educators must transform. Teachers are no longer just sources of facts. They are now dynamic facilitators who build critical thinking and emotional strength in their students.

Power Tools for Educators: The highly engaging workshop featured fun ice-breakers and deep life lessons. Teachers learned to unlock three vital mindsets:

- **Power of NOW:** Dynamic presence in the classroom.
- **Power of CHOICE:** Decisive actions that inspire students.
- **Power of PAUSE:** Thoughtful reflection before reacting.

The faculty also gained comfort from the peaceful Serenity Prayer to balance their busy days. The energizing day ended with an open question session, great food, and a warm vote of thanks. Teachers left the room charged up and fully ready to lead their students to success!

SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF FOUNDATION OF FATHER AGNEL SCHOOL, NOIDA



His Grace Dr. Raphy Manjaly, Archbishop of Agra, was the Main Celebrant for the Silver Jubilee Mass. Seen to his right are the founders, Rev. Fr. Bento Rodrigues and Rev. Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho.

Founded in 2001, **Father Agnel School, Noida**, now stands at the proud threshold of its **Silver Jubilee, commemorating 25 years of dedication to excellence in education**. This milestone is not merely a celebration of years gone by, but a tribute to a journey shaped by vision, resilience, and shared purpose. At this defining moment, every Agnelite is called to rise beyond the ordinary with brave minds and compassionate hearts, carrying forward the enduring message: **'Love Your Neighbour as Yourself.'**

Guided by this spirit, the institution continues to nurture thoughtful leaders, innovative minds, and socially conscious individuals committed to creating a more inclusive, rational, and caring world.

On 25th April 2026, Father Agnel School, Noida inaugurated its Silver Jubilee celebrations with a solemn Holy Mass, commemorating twenty-five years of distinguished service in education. The celebration was a profound occasion of thanksgiving, reflection, and spiritual renewal for the entire school community.

The Holy Eucharistic celebration was graced by the august presence of **His Grace Dr. Raphy Manjaly**, Archbishop of Agra, who was the Main Celebrant for the occasion. His Grace led the congregation in prayer and thanksgiving, invoking God's continued blessings upon the institution, its management, staff, students, alumni, and benefactors.

In his inspiring address following the felicitation ceremony, His Grace emphasised the vital role of education in nurturing compassionate and responsible leaders who would serve society and contribute towards peace, harmony, and national progress.

The gathering paid tribute to the visionary founders, **Rev. Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho** and **Rev. Fr. Bento Rodrigues**, whose dedication laid the foundation of the institution's legacy of excellence and values-based education. Special felicitations were accorded to **Fr. Bento**, **Fr. John Roshan**, **Fr. Roy**, **Fr. Alban**, and **Mrs. Tina John** for their dedicated service and support towards the growth and mission of the institution.

The celebration concluded with the school hymn and a fellowship lunch, fostering gratitude, unity, and renewed commitment to holistic education and service. The Silver Jubilee celebration stood as a testament to God's enduring grace and the institution's unwavering commitment to holistic education and it renews its mission to continue forming young minds and hearts imbued with faith, knowledge, compassion, and service for the greater glory of God and humanity.

The Holistic Beauty and Wonder of Sport



- Leon Bent

War Divides and Destroys, Sports Unifies and Enchants the World!

The beauty of sports lies in the perfect convergence of human potential, emotional tension, and physical poetry. It transcends mere competition, elevating athletic movement into an expressive art form. This allure captivates us through distinct facets that speak directly to the human experience.

The allure of sports lies in its unique ability to blend unpredictable entertainment, clear-cut outcomes, and deep human connection. It acts as a universal language, transcending cultures and offering, both, participants and spectators an emotional journey that celebrates physical potential and unites communities. Since time immemorial, through the expression of our bodies, humans have sought a way to transcend mere physical and athletic aspects in an effort to perceive their inner resources. This quest for higher levels of self-knowledge has always been there, more or less conscious at different degrees.

The Olympic Games, born from ancient Greek philosophy, is just an example, maybe the highest in the symbolic sense. The same could be said about the noble tradition of the martial arts of the Far East, or the relatively recent tradition of sports connected to the conquest of mountains.

In any kind of sport, there has certainly always been a latent aspiration to draw the best out of ourselves, and thus reach a sort of realization of our inner selves. In this context, it seems that the word "expression" goes hand in hand with the word "aspiration." We could say that sport allows us to express ourselves in a full, powerful, and genuine way, the prime impulse being ambition.

Sport is a living thing – more than just living! Despite the level of performance, be it a weekend amateur or a professional, sport awakens vital and beneficial energies in every sense: Physically, mentally, and emotionally. There is likely no other activity in the material plane that, can produce such a sense of well-being as sport can do. And this can

be experienced in any competitive, physical activity or game played under specific rules, aimed at improving physical fitness, building social relationships, or earning entertainment value.

Together with music, sport is a show that gives true, elevating and vibrant emotions. Empathizing with high-level athletes is easy, because it is absolutely clear that what comes to our perception, is much more than a mere run or a goal or a winning shot. Real admiration is then aroused in us, an awe-inspiring reverence for intangible qualities that, now come true in concrete form, either seen on the TV screen or feel the same exhilaration in our own unique way!



In essence, sport is like a mirror, and is a very powerful instrument of growth, which can open up to a learning process that, goes on and on and on. Sport is one of the few situations where we cannot bluff, because the results speak for themselves! It is just an inexorable truth and it applies to any level concerned. Sport compels us to take stock of what we are and humbly come to terms with it. It's all there: What is your potential? How can you express your capability, capacity, gift and aptitude?

What are your shortcomings? What motivates you to persevere?

To go beyond limits doesn't necessarily mean breaking records. Not at all! That is not the real goal of all efforts. Anybody can exceed a limit, not the one pre-fixed by some standards or by a specimen, but their own, whatever that is. That's where the real challenge lies, and it's a wonderful, exciting, intriguing, funny, and evolutionary challenge. That's where sport acquires its noble value.

When we witness a great performance, where the outcome is determined by such noble qualities more than physical prowess, then it becomes clear from where it all starts – the heart. Be it a team or single sport, it is always the same energy which really makes the difference. Courage, strength, perseverance, trust, introspection, generosity,

group spirit, selflessness – all of these qualities come from the heart.

Sport is more than just a game. Sport clearly reflects the grubby, greedy world that feeds on it, but it also stands apart, preserving a timeless spectacle of effort and emotion, mind and body, flesh and feeling.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is making history as the largest and most globally attended tournament ever. Spanning 104 matches across 16 host cities in the USA, Canada, and Mexico, the event is drawing record crowds and setting new milestones for spectator engagement.

Fans from across the globe have descended upon North America to witness the record 48-team tournament. The opening weeks shattered previous daily attendance records, with matches averaging over 65,000 fans per game and the total attendance soaring past 1.3 million spectators within the first week.

The expanded tournament has taken the spectacle's reach far and beyond ever imagined as fans across the globe celebrate their favorite nations in a passionate manner.

The ultimate unifying factor of the FIFA World Cup is the global pursuit of the FIFA World Cup Trophy and the unifying spirit of football, which brings together 48 nations and billions of fans across all cultures, complexions, languages, and backgrounds every four years.

The World Cup transcends localized rivalries and political boundaries to create a universally shared human experience, driven by several key harmonizers.

The Ultimate Prize

- **The Trophy:** The gold FIFA World Cup Trophy is the single, tangible object that every competing nation fights to hold aloft, symbolizing global supremacy.

Shared Global Rituals

- **National Anthems:** Watching players stand shoulder-to-shoulder, singing their national anthems before millions of viewers, fosters immense pride and unifies entire countries.
- **Global Spectatorship:** The World Cup acts as a rare catalyst for global alignment, where people across the globe simultaneously tune in to celebrate the same sporting event.

Expanded Tournament Format (2026)

- **More Representation:** The 2026 tournament acts as a massive global unifier by expanding the tournament to a record 48 teams (up from 32).
- **Diverse Host Nations:** It is historically unifying as the first time three countries — Canada, Mexico, and the United States — are co-hosting the event, showcasing the collaboration of North American cultures.

The Language of the Game

- **Rule Universality:** The exact same football rules are applied globally, which means fans from Mumbai to Mexico can communicate, debate, and share in the highs and lows of the sport without language barriers.

Tournament Legacy

- **Inclusivity:** By expanding the tournament to 48 teams, FIFA broadens global participation, giving historically under represented regions (such as expanded spots for Africa and Asia) a chance to shine on the world stage.

Sports spiritualizes us:

Intense physical exertion can serve as a powerful gateway to spirituality. Pushing your physical limits quiets the overactive mind, forcing you into absolute presence and revealing profound mind-body connections that mirror traditional meditative states.

The spiritual elevation found in high-intensity sports and endurance activities is tied to several key elements:

- **The "Flow" State:** When you are completely immersed in a demanding physical activity — like sprinting or climbing — self-consciousness drops away. This meditative immersion allows you to tap into deep intuition and a sense of connection to something greater than yourself.
- **Emotional Release:** Intense sport helps release internal stress and pressure. It activates energy pathways within the body, acting as an active form of prayer or moving meditation.
- **Testing Ego and Humility:** The inevitable moments of failure, pain, and triumph in sports mimic the spiritual journey. They force practitioners to practice patience, resilience, and surrender.



- **Mind-Body Awareness:** Honing your physical capabilities and understanding your body's sensations cultivate a deeper appreciation for the present moment and personal growth.

If you're exploring this connection, I can help you by:

- Sharing specific mindset shifts to turn your workouts into meditation
- Suggesting intense sports known for their spiritual elements (like martial arts or long-distance running)

Which aspect of this mind-body connection would you like to explore?

Conclusion:

In many ways, athletes exemplify the very best of humanity. The way that the teams work perfectly together. The way that each athlete bounces back in her/his own way and can make the sweetest lemonade out of the sourest lemons. When I looked out onto Arthur Ashe Tennis Court in Flushing Meadows, New York City, I saw a group of heroes

who, in the face of overwhelming pressure and adversity, remained determined to work together, bounce back, and earn every point they could. When I left, I felt inspired to adopt that fighting spirit in my own life. That, in essence, is the real, purpose of sports: To help us find, in many ways, a better version of ourselves. To transform us from 'creepy caterpillars into exotic, floating and gliding butterflies!' Sports transfigures us from mere human beings to divine persons!



***Leon Bent** writes because, with the rise of the web and its quick dispatches, people are hungry for profound thought, for depth, for insight, for sustained description and the touch of the Divine.*



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Sajeevu Mathew, Kottayam, Kerala

I have contributed an amount of Rs.10,000 via cheque as a thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel for various intentions being fulfilled. It is also for the maintenance and daily needs of the Balbhavan boys.

Sijo John, Changancherry, Kerala

I am pleased to donate an amount of Rs.50,000 through NEFT for the community activities of Fr. Agnel Ashram and the welfare of the Balbhavan children.

Prafulla Dave, Borivali, Mumbai

As a token of thanksgiving for various favours received through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have donated an amount of Rs.1750 for the upkeep of Fr. Agnel Ashram and Balbhavan.

Dimple Lloyd Pereira, Santacruz, Mumbai

I have made a contribution of Rs.1250 via UPI, as a mini sponsorship for a Balbhavan boy.

Rabia J. Khan, Mira Road

We are happy to provide a donation of Rs.1250 through NEFT for the daily needs, education and training of the Balbhavan boys in Fr. Agnel Ashram.

Meena Thakkar, Borivali, Mumbai

I have made a contribution of Rs.14,000 towards the various charitable activities of Fr. Agnel Ashram and maintenance of the Balbhavan boys.

Maniben Ishwarbhai Waghela, Anand, Gujarat

I have contributed an amount of Rs.10,000 by Money Order towards fulfilling the various needs of the Balbhavan children. The Fathers of Fr. Agnel Ashram are bringing them up with love, care and concern.

Sonali & Pooja S. Amonkar, Mumbai

We have made a donation of Rs.10,200 via UPI for the welfare and maintenance of the Balbhavan boys under your care.

Friends Forever

- Merlin Dalmeida

Friendship has been here for years and decades. The relationship that friends share is impeccable and cannot be replaced. Friendship Day was first proposed in 1930 by Joyce Hall, the founder of Hallmark Cards. The idea was further promoted by the greeting card American National Association, but was not taken in a healthy spirit as it reflected the commercial gimmick to promote the greeting cards in name of Friendship Day. The original date of celebration was 2 August, though it has since been moved to 7 August in the United States due to de-synchronisation in the US.

The UN International Day of Friendship is observed annually on July 30 to promote peace and understanding between cultures. You can use Artificial Intelligence to generate, translate, or format documents celebrating this event. AI tools quickly draft speeches, lesson plans, social media posts, or essays focused on global harmony and connection. In a time when the noise of division grows louder - fuelled by wars, conflicts, inequality, and fear - friendship feels almost radical in its simplicity. It doesn't arrive with fanfare or policy; it doesn't need speeches or signatures. It begins with something quieter: a conversation, a shared moment, a willingness to see one another not as strangers but as fellow travellers through the human experience.

In this year's observance of the International Day of Friendship, we're reminded that real peace is forged not only in negotiation halls or by writing into treaties - it's built, thread by thread, in the trust we extend to one another in daily life.

Friendship, especially among young people, holds a special kind of power. It can cross languages, faiths, and histories that might otherwise divide us. It invites us to listen before we judge, to stay when it's easier to walk away. And when nurtured across cultures and communities, friendship becomes more than a bond - it becomes a blueprint for reconciliation. It teaches us that understanding isn't a grand achievement; it's a habit, a practice, a way of moving through the world that says 'your well-being matters to me too'.

This year, as the world faces profound ruptures - between nations, within societies, even within families - the call to friendship is not sentimental. It's essential. It's about reaching across what breaks us and daring to believe in something better. It is a call to imagine a future where difference doesn't mean

distance, where trust is stronger than fear. Through friendship, we don't just cope with the world as it is - we begin to shape the world as it could be.

The International Day of Friendship was proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

The resolution places emphasis on involving young people, as future leaders, in community activities that include different cultures and promote international understanding and respect for diversity.

To mark the International Day of Friendship, the UN encourages governments, international organizations and civil society groups to hold events, activities and initiatives that contribute to the efforts of the international community towards promoting a dialogue among civilizations, solidarity, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

The International Day of Friendship is an initiative that follows on the proposal made by UNESCO defining the Culture of Peace as a set of values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes with a view to solving problems. It was then adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1997.

Actions to Promote a Culture of Peace

- foster a culture of peace through education;
- promote sustainable economic and social development;
- promote respect for all human rights;
- ensure equality between women and men;
- foster democratic participation;
- advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity;
- support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge;
- promote international peace and security.



Merlin Dalmeida believes that the pen is mightier than the sword...our thoughts are turned to words and inspire young minds all over. There is clarity of thoughts through words and she hopes to enlighten the audience and readers.

ESTHER: COURAGEOUS QUEEN, FAITHFUL DAUGHTER OF GOD

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

A Star Rises in a Foreign Land

At times in history, God raises ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary tasks. One such figure is Esther, a young Jewish woman who became queen of Persia and saved her people from destruction. Her story, found in the Book of Esther, is one of courage, faith, and trust in God's providence. Esther's life reminds us that God can use even the most unlikely person to accomplish His saving plan.

The Name That Shines Like a Star

The name *Esther* likely comes from the Persian word meaning “star.” Some scholars also connect it with the Hebrew root *hester*, meaning “hidden.” Interestingly, Esther's Hebrew name was **Hadassah**, which means “myrtle,” a plant associated with peace and blessing (Esther 2:7). Both meanings reflect aspects of her life: like a shining star, she rose to a place of influence, yet God's action in the book often remains hidden, guiding events quietly behind the scenes.

A Jewish Girl in a Persian Empire

Esther lived during the period after the **Babylonian exile**, when many Jews were scattered throughout the Persian Empire. The events in the Book of Esther take place during the reign of the Persian king **Ahasuerus**, commonly identified with King Xerxes I (around 486–465 BC).

Although some Jews had returned to Jerusalem after the exile, many remained in foreign lands. Living as a minority in a powerful empire was often difficult and sometimes dangerous. The story of Esther shows how God protected His people even when they lived far from their homeland.

From Orphan to Queen

Esther was a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin **Mordecai** (Esther 2:5–7). When King Ahasuerus sought a new queen, Esther was taken into the royal palace and eventually chosen as queen because of her beauty and grace (Esther 2:17).

At first, Esther kept her Jewish identity secret, following Mordecai's advice (Esther 2:10). Yet God had placed her in the royal court for a greater purpose. Though she held a privileged position, her true mission would come when her people faced a deadly threat.

“For Such a Time as This”

The turning point in Esther's life came when a royal official named **Haman** plotted to destroy all the Jews in the Persian Empire (Esther 3:8–9). When Mordecai learned of this plan, he urged Esther to approach the king and plead for her people.

Approaching the king without being summoned was dangerous and could lead to death (Esther 4:11). Yet Mordecai reminded her of a powerful truth:

“Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

Esther responded with faith and courage. She asked the Jewish people to fast and pray for three days (Esther 4:16). Trusting in God, she resolved to approach the king, declaring, *“If I perish, I perish.”*

Courage in the Face of Danger

Esther courageously entered the king's presence and was welcomed (Esther 5:1–2). Through wisdom and patience, she invited the king and Haman to a banquet and later revealed Haman's wicked plot.

The king was outraged and ordered Haman's execution (Esther 7:9–10). As a result, the Jews were saved from destruction. This deliverance became the basis for the Jewish feast of **Purim**, celebrated each year to remember God's saving intervention (Esther 9:20–22).

Though the Book of Esther rarely mentions God explicitly, His providence is evident in every turn of events.

A Witness of Faith for Every Generation

Esther's story highlights several virtues that inspire believers today. She showed **courage**, risking her life for her people. She demonstrated **humility**, listening to Mordecai's guidance. She practiced **faith and prayer**, calling the people to fasting before taking action.

Her life also reflects deep **trust in God's providence**. Even in a foreign land, far from the temple in Jerusalem, she believed that God was guiding the destiny of His people.

Place in Salvation History

Esther played a crucial role in preserving the Jewish people at a critical moment in history. By saving her

nation from destruction, she helped ensure the continuation of the people through whom God's promises would be fulfilled.

Esther can be seen as a figure who prefigures Christ's saving work, one who risks everything for the sake of others. Some Christian writers also see parallels between Esther and the **Blessed Virgin Mary**, who courageously cooperated with God's plan for the salvation of the world.

Lessons for Christians Today

Esther's life offers powerful lessons for us today. First, it reminds us that **God places us where we are for a purpose**. Like Esther, we may find ourselves in situations where our faith and courage are needed.

Second, her story shows the importance of **prayer and discernment** before acting. Esther did not rush forward impulsively; she first sought God through fasting and prayer.

Finally, Esther teaches us that **faith sometimes requires risk**. Standing for truth, justice, and the dignity of others may not always be easy, but God calls His people to act with courage.

Conclusion

The story of Esther shines like a star in the pages of Scripture. Though she began as a hidden and vulnerable orphan, she became a courageous queen who saved her people. Her life reminds us that God works quietly through human choices, guiding history toward His saving purpose.

Esther's witness calls us to trust God's providence and to respond with courage whenever we are called to serve others. Like Esther, each of us may discover that we are placed in our own circumstances "**for such a time as this**" (Esther 4:14).

Quiz on The Life of Esther

1. In which book of the Bible do we find the story of Esther?

- A. Book of Judith
- B. Book of Esther
- C. Book of Ruth
- D. Book of Nehemiah

2. What was Esther's Hebrew name?

- A. Deborah
- B. Miriam
- C. Hadassah
- D. Hannah

3. Who raised Esther after her parents died?

- A. Ezra
- B. Mordecai
- C. Daniel
- D. Nehemiah

4. Esther became the queen of king?

- A. King Nebuchadnezzar
- B. King Cyrus
- C. King Ahasuerus (Xerxes)
- D. King Darius

5. Why did King Ahasuerus choose Esther as queen?

- A. Because she was wise and beautiful
- B. Because she was from a royal family
- C. Because Mordecai commanded it
- D. Because she defeated enemies in battle

6. At first, Esther did not reveal that she was

- A. A queen
- B. A Jew
- C. A princess
- D. A prophet

7. Who planned to destroy all the Jews in the Persian Empire?

- A. Haman
- B. Mordecai
- C. Ezra
- D. Nehemiah

8. What did Mordecai ask Esther to do when the Jews were in danger?

- A. Leave the palace
- B. Hide her identity
- C. Speak to the king on behalf of her people
- D. Start a war

9. What famous words did Mordecai say to Esther?

- A. "The Lord is my shepherd."
- B. "For such a time as this."
- C. "Be strong and courageous."
- D. "The truth will set you free."

10. What did Esther ask the Jewish people to do?

- A. Build a temple
- B. Pray and fast for three days
- C. Leave the country
- D. Write to the king

11. What risk did Esther take in meeting the king?

- A. She could be sent into exile
- B. She could lose her crown
- C. She could be put to death
- D. She could be imprisoned

12. When did Esther reveal Haman's plot to the king?

- A. Through a letter
- B. During a banquet
- C. In the temple
- D. Through a messenger

13. What happened to Haman after the king learned of his evil plan?

- A. He escaped
- B. He was imprisoned
- C. He was executed
- D. He became a servant

14. Which Jewish feast commemorates the deliverance of the Jews in the time of Esther?

- A. Passover
- B. Pentecost
- C. Purim
- D. Tabernacles

15. What virtue is especially seen in Esther's actions?

- A. Pride
- B. Courage
- C. Anger
- D. Wealth

Answers

- 1. B – Book of Esther
- 2. C – Hadassah
- 3. B – Mordecai
- 4. C – King Ahasuerus (Xerxes)
- 5. A – Because she was wise and beautiful
- 6. B – A Jew
- 7. A – Haman
- 8. C – Speak to the king on behalf of her people
- 9. B – “For such a time as this.”
- 10. B – Pray and fast for three days
- 11. C – She could be put to death
- 12. B – During a banquet
- 13. C – He was executed
- 14. C – Purim
- 15. B – Courage



Fr. Trevor D'Souza, OFM, is a Franciscan Priest, Retreat Preacher and a Writer. He can be contacted at jc4me2000@gmail.com

AGNEL CO-OPERATORS

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

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JUST FOR FUN

- Christine D'Sylva

We are in the midst of the rainy season and admittedly a blessed respite from quite a scorching summer heat we had experienced this year.

The World Population Day on 11th July, World Hepatitis Day on 28th July and the International Tiger Day on 29th July are some of the important events of this month.

So let's begin ...

The Encounter



In December 1997, a poacher and hunter named Vladamir Markov shot and wounded a massive Siberian tiger near the Bikin river in the Primorye region. He did not finish the tiger off or report it. Instead, he stole a

significant portion of the tiger's fresh prey and kept the animal's gall bladder which is highly valued in the black market.

What happened next shocked wildlife experts.

The wounded tiger did not flee. Instead he stalked Markov with terrifying intelligence and premeditation. He tracked the man down and waited for him.

The tiger waited in the freezing taiga for over 24 hours. It systematically sought out and destroyed every item bearing Markov's scent, chewed his mattress and obliterated anything that identified the cabin as Markov's territory.

When Markov finally returned to his cabin, the tiger was waiting for him outside his front door. The tiger ambushed him, killed him and dragged his remains to the surrounding bush.

Following the attack, the tiger was killed in a fatal encounter by the Russian government who dispatched a special conservation and inspection squad.

This story serves as a haunting reminder of the tiger's formidable memory, intelligence and lethal capabilities when pushed to the brink by human interference.

Man has to learn respect for all creatures who deserve to exist on our planet, the same way we do in peace and harmony. Hunting is not a sport to be admired. It breeds a kind of personality that is unfeeling and vicious. It is said those that kill animals can kill humans too equally with little remorse. To treat animals like game is not adhering to the principle that God made all living creatures with love and did not expect humans to mistreat them. Hunting for sport and game is not admirable.

We should never hunt for sport or to harm them but honour God's creatures with respect for God made

every living creature with the same love and kindness he showed us humans. We may be the crown of his creation but every living thing made by him is beautiful and precious in his eyes too.

Quiz

All about Tigers



1. Is it true that tigers are the largest wild cats in the world?
2. How long are the tigers tails?
3. How loud is a tiger's roar?
4. Are baby tigers born blind?
5. How high can a tiger jump?

Inspirational Quotes

Sylvester Stallone is an actor, writer and director best known for his movie Rocky that had four sequels.

Here are some of his inspiring quotes.



1. It ain't how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward.
2. You must fall a hundred times to succeed once.
3. I believe there is an inner power that makes winners or losers.
4. Every time I failed, people had me out for the count but I always came back.
5. I could start a war in 30 seconds. But some countries spend 100 years trying to find peace. Just like good manners, peace has to be learned.

True Story

The man behind his genius



Ludwig van Beethoven was a musical genius but his daily life was notoriously chaotic. He was incredibly absent-minded, struggled with basic arithmetic and had such unkempt habits he was often mistaken for a vagabond.

He moved apartments over 60 times in Vienna because he was an absolute nightmare for landlords. He worked through the night, pounding on pianos and permanently damaging walls. On one occasion, he wandered out to the countryside looking so dishevelled that the locals reported him to the police for loitering.

He spent the night in his cell screaming - "I am Beethoven."

But nobody believed him till the local choir master was called and he identified him as Beethoven.

His most famous ritual was his coffee. He required his

morning brew to be made out of precisely 60 beans and he would spend time meticulously counting the coffee beans to make sure there were 60 of them. Therefore he spent more time on the preparation of coffee than actually drinking it. However, his musical genius still lives on and he is still highly venerated as a musical genius giving the world such beautiful compositions like Moonlight Sonata and Fur Elise. He wrote 722 music works in his life and they all bear testimony to his genius.

Naturopathy - The science of healing by nature



1. Chewing on fresh mint leaves can help ease stomach upsets.
2. For minor cuts and burns to speed healing, apply a thin layer of aloe vera gel or raw honey.

3. Drinking lavender tea can help ease anxiety and stress as well as migraine attacks and headaches caused by anxiety.
4. For a natural shampoo apply oat flour, a little clay powder mixed with one egg, massage well then rinse out. This is great for oily hair.
5. Applying lemon juice to the scalp before shampooing cures dandruff.

Riddle Me



1. What has a neck but no head or hands?
2. What has many words but cannot speak?
3. Why are teddy bears never hungry?
4. Nobody empties me but I am quarter sometimes and at times half full.

What am I? 5. A man is seated in a grey car. In front of him is a blue door and a white door. Which door will he open first?

World News



Each year, the arrival of flamingos transforms the lagoons of northern Sri Lanka into a mesmerising spectacle of pale pink and white.

Their synchronised movements across the shallow waters of Mannar attract bird watchers, photographers, tourists and nature lovers from around the country and from abroad.

But there is a growing crisis because of the power lines. The flamingos can meet their death after a collision. Three flamingos were killed like this and a veterinary surgeon said that it was not electrocution but rather their long necks were slashed mid-flight when they struck the cables.

Across the world, power lines are recognized as a major threat to flamingos and other large water birds. In Navi Mumbai, the sight of these pink and white beautiful creatures is viewed mostly in three places.

One is at Karave Flamingo point (Seawoods), the second is at DPS Flamingo lake (Seawoods) and the third is the Thane creek flamingo sanctuary at Airoli and Vashi.

This sight of hundreds of these flamingos attract people who come to take photos and watch them. In cities which are concrete jungles of tall buildings and skyscrapers with scarce open spaces, these open places serve to show people the beauty of nature and the value of seeing nature in its glory.

Brain Teasers



1. You are driving a cab. It is new and blue. Two people get into the cab after dropping the first two off. What is the colour of the cab driver's eyes?
2. A farmer has ten sheep, all but three ran away. How many sheep

are left?

3. A water level in a reservoir doubles every day and it takes 60 days to fill. How long does it take to become half full?
4. What occurs in a moment and a second but not in a minute?
5. Two mothers and two daughters went out to eat. They each ate a burger yet only three burgers were eaten in all. How is this possible?

Inspirational Story

Bruce Willis is the actor who acted in the movie *Die*



Hard gained fame after the TV series, *Moonlighting* in which he co-starred with Cybil Shepherd. In his childhood, he had a serious stutter. Born in West Germany in a blue collar family, he felt conscious of his stutter. Therefore he decided to become the class clown. When he stepped on stage in his high school drama club, he discovered that acting could make his stutter disappear.

He became a leading star in Hollywood. This was done with the help of drama teachers and speech therapists at University. This ability of his to transform a serious childhood drawback into such success is very uplifting. It shows us that despite physical or mental disabilities, where there is will there is a way. Nothing is impossible without perseverance and hard work and an innate self-confidence in oneself.

Smile Please



1. Phases of life. At 10 a child says - I want to be a pilot.
At 15 - I want to be a scientist.
At 20 - I want to be an engineer.
At 25 - I want to be a kid again.

2. Wife - Honey can you do me a

favour?

Husband - Sure anything, my love.

Wife - Can you kill a lion for me?

Husband - Are you mad? Please request something else.

Wife - Can I go through your WhatsApp please?

Husband - Where is the lion you want me to kill?

2. A boy started jumping up and down. His friend asked him why.

The boy said - Today for the first time a girl talked to me.

Friend - That is nice. What happened?

Boy - I was sitting in the metro and a girl came up and told me to get up as this was ladies seat.

3. Why did the belt get arrested?

It held up a pair of pants.

Wisdom Message of the Month



Be the change you want to see

We all at times like to complain about things yet few people actually do much about it.

This reminds me of a story that took place a long time ago.

A king decided to test his subjects. He ordered his men to place a big boulder in the middle of the road. They did so.

Many people passed. They saw the boulder and complained how bad it was for this to happen. Yet nobody did anything about it. They merely skirted around it. Some active ones even jumped over it!

Then came a young man. He saw the boulder and realising nobody was doing anything about it, decided to take action. He began to push it. Since he was strong and young, he managed a little. Soon another young man joined in and then a few more. Somehow they all managed to move the very big and heavy boulder to the side of the road.

The king had ordered his trusted minister to watch the road each day. The minister went up to the young man and told him the King would like to see him.

The king praised the enterprising young man and this man was made a minister at his court.

We too come across such situations.

In a building, a young lady found that the lobby at her floor was always dirty and unkempt. The sweepers and cleaners were never doing their job despite several complaints. She decided to take matters into her own hands. Each day, she mopped the long lobby and soon the results were obvious. It looked nice and clean and not a sight for sore eyes.

Her neighbours were shocked and felt she ought not to do this menial work like a servant.

But to her change only starts with oneself. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

A man had a dog. He trained the dog to pick up plastic bottles from the street each morning. The dog did so faithfully. With the result the once rather littered street now looked a lot cleaner. We need more such people and dogs in our neighbourhoods.

What do we learn?

The moral of the story is that instead of complaining about things, let's be the first to try to make a change. Our efforts may not always give fantastic results but if our efforts result in a small change then that is enough. It beats just looking the other way, complaining and never doing anything concrete.

Every great leader thought in this positive manner. They decided not to wallow in apathy but to make a difference whether it is Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi.

Few of us can reach these heights but we in our own way can contribute into making a small difference in our neighbourhood each day. After all it takes many ripples to make a giant wave.

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

Answers

Quiz

1. Yes. 2. Up to three feet. 3. It can be heard two miles away.

4. Yes. 5. Tigers can leap up to 33 feet.

Riddle Me

1. Bottle. 2. Book. 3. They are always stuffed. 4. Moon. 5. The car door.

Brain Teasers

1. Your eye colour. 2. Three. 3. 59. If it doubles each day the previous day was exactly half full.

4. The letter o. 5. The two ladies were mother and grand-mother with just one grand-daughter, so in total there are three ladies.



Christine DSylva has just published her 40th book, available on Kindle and in paperback on Amazon. She is currently writing another book. She enjoys playing the piano and has a YouTube channel, Christine DSylva Fusion Kitchen.



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

THANKSGIVING FOR BEING

A PILLAR OF SUPPORT

VASAI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for being with me always and supporting me during difficult times, through his intercession.

- Mary Fernandes

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

POWAI, MUMBAI: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for interceding and being there for me always.

- Melwyn Alexander

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

KHAR, MUMBAI: I can always count on the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel during troubled moments.

- Rochelle D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

KALINA, MUMBAI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing Vincent Mendes on his birthday. May he continue to enjoy good health, peace, happiness and prosperity.

- Patricia Mendes

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

PUNE: We are thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing us with good health, peace, happiness and prosperity. We always feel a divine power when we visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra Bandstand, Mumbai.

- Parkhey Family

THANKSGIVING FOR INTERCESSIONS

VIRAR: I express my deep gratitude to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his powerful intercessions. I have deep faith in the Venerable.

- Linus Alex Pereira

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

MUMBAI: As a devotee of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I always turn to the Venerable with prayer requests during difficult times. The Venerable has always interceded for me and I have felt peace of mind.

- Catherine Justin Lemos

THANKSGIVING FOR EVERYTHING

KHARGHAR: Our prayers have been answered through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel for which we are grateful.

- Selva Fernando

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

GUJARAT: I have faith in Ven. Fr. Agnel and I am always thankful to the pious Venerable for his intercessions.

- Jayshree Macwan

THANKSGIVING FOR RECONCILIATION

BANDRA, MUMBAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has helped me in his life with his powerful intercessions.

- Sheela Simon

THANKSGIVING FOR INCREASE IN SALARY

VASAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has answered my prayer and has helped me to get an increase in salary.

- Darian Gonsalves

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD SSC RESULT

SANTACRUZ, MUMBAI: Thanks to the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have obtained a good result in my SSC exams.

- Mario Caldeira

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

TRISSUR, KERALA: I am grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for all the favours received in my life.

- Kevin Joy

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS ON WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

AIROLI: We are thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for all the blessings we have received on our Wedding Anniversary.

- Arul Oli & Sailaja

THANKSGIVING FOR PASSING EXAMS WITH FLYING COLOURS

NASHIK: I am indeed grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping me obtain good results in my SSC exams.

- Sunil Ahire

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESS OF DAUGHTER'S WEDDING

JUHU, MUMBAI: My family is happy and grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel on my daughter's wedding being conducted smoothly.

- Godfrey Creado

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH AND GOOD JOB

VASAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed me with good health and a good job, for which I am truly grateful.

- Vipeen Chaudhari

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

Hiten Bajaj	Mumbai	70000	Praveen Oberoi	Delhi	2000	Sarah V. Pereira	Vasai	1000
Praveen M. Srivastava	Mumbai	51000	Hiren Gala	Dombivili	1800	Jezebel Creado	Mumbai	1000
Muriel Mitra	Mumbai	15000	Hema R. Soni	Vadodara	1600	Sahaya Maria Singh	Kanyakumari	1000
Shahveer Desai	Mumbai	15000	Premilla Verdes	Mumbai	1250	Nachiket K. Borse	Mumbai	1000
SVS Rama Rao	Mumbai	15000	Rita Johnson	Thrissur	1200	Janci K. Borse	Mumbai	1000
Ajay D'Cruz	Mumbai	15000	Monica D'Souza	Pune	1200	Melvin Joseph	Mysore	1000
Shital Doshi	Mumbai	11111	Kaveer Thakker	Mumbai	1100	John Thomas	Kerala	1000
Gregory M. Pillay	Pune	10000	John Fernandes	Mumbai	1100	Rockhenry Chettiar	Thane	1000
Urvashi D. Udeshi	Dahisar	10000	Kashmira M. Khajotia	Mumbai	1001	Rackson Fernandes	Goa	1000
Hutoxi Z. Bharucha	Vasai	10000	Mehernosh K. Khajotia	Mumbai	1001	Felix Pinto	Mumbai	1000
Anna D'Souza	Mumbai	10000	Kaushik Rathod	Nalasopara	1001	Bulbul Dutt	Kolkata	1000
Falguni Solanki	Mira Road	8200	Sunita D. Furtado	Vasai	1000	Ryan D'Souza	Mumbai	1000
Manjula Velji Gala	Ambernath	6250	Osden T. Lopes	Vasai	1000	Vinayak J. Gaikwad	Igatpuri	1000
Warren Fernandes	Mumbai	6000	Priya Anshul D. Vora	Mumbai	1000	K.S. Ajayakumar	Kerala	1000
Subramaniam R. Huf	Mumbai	5250	N.G. Asher	Mumbai	1000	Caston A. Motheghar	Thane	1000
Neha Suresh Naik	Nalasopara	5001	Fittech Industries	Mumbai	1000	N.C. Babu	Kerala	1000
Oscar Pereira	Dahisar	5000	Ankit G. Patel	Mumbai	1000	S. Jestine Sales	Tamil Nadu	1000
Arokia Gerald	Mumbai	5000	Ghanshyan K. Patel	Mumbai	1000	Raj Pachikkara/Neena Raj	Kochi	800
Nayan & Megha Thar	Mumbai	5000	Sangita G. Patel	Mumbai	1000	Atul K. Dedhia	Mumbai	510
Sahaya Selja	Mumbai	5000	Jinal Patel	Mumbai	1000	Shahzad M. Khajotia	Mumbai	501
Dimple H. Gonsalves	Vasai	5000	Unmash Angre	Mumbai	1000	Dhruti Parikh	Mumbai	501
Simi Koyande	New York	4000	Sonal Chauhan	Ahmedabad	1000	Mahrugh Mistry	Nashik	501
John Raj	New York	4000	Gregory N. Rodrigues	Mumbai	1000	Mathew Kurian	Bangalore	501
Primrose Collins	Mumbai	3000	Jefferson A. Saldanha	Mumbai	1000	Nehal Thaker	Mumbai	501
Mini George	Kerala	3000	Ethan H. D'Mello	Vasai	1000	Agnel U.	Coimbatore	500
Techno Products	Chennai	3000	C.K. Jacob	Kerala	1000	Vijay Bhimji Solanki	Daman & Diu	500
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Fransquinha Fernandes	Mumbai	2500	Joyce S.Jamble	Malad	1000	Anusha Kataria	Mumbai	500
Edwina D'Souza	Mumbai	2500	Leo G. Machado	Vasai	1000	Irene D'Souza	Dombivili	500
Agnelo Rodrigues	Dahisar	2000	Henry Felix Pereira	Vasai	1000	Neela Macwan	Vadodara	500
Fatima R. Fernandes	Mumbai	2000	Ida Gomes	Mumbai	1000	Domnic Dias	Nalasopara	500
Rohin Bomanji	Mumbai	2000	Jaya Menon	Mumbai	1000	Priya Sugathan	Mira Road	500
Anita Naidu	Thane	2000	Hemangi Prasad	Khargar	1000	Shakuntala Tribhuvan	Pune	500
Reagan Fernandes	Mumbai	2000	Anthony Thomson	Kochi	1000	Niranjan M. Amolik	Ahmednagar	500
Vibha S./Hemant H.	Ahmedabad	2000	George Kuruvila	Kozhikode	1000	Harish N. Suvarna	Mangalore	500
Maria D'Souza	Mumbai	2000	Maryantony	Kerala	1000	Victor R.	Mumbai	500
Lynette Santiago	Nagpur	2000	Jobi George	Kerala	1000	Amrith Raj/R.S. Raju	Chennai	500
Gavin P. Fonseca	Mumbai	2000	Lisy M. D'Silva	Puducherry	1000	Priya S. Bhandarkar	Mumbai	500
Isabel Hendricks	Villupuram	2000	Darragh Smail & Co.	Kochi	1000	Anto Paul	Ernakulam	500
Attely Kuttikadan	Dombivili	2000	Anthony J. George	Mumbai	1000	Anthony V. Xavier	Mumbai	500
Kavya Dave	Mumbai	2000	Alice Gomes	Mumbai	1000	Agnella Abraham	Mumbai	500
Agnelo Godinho	Goa	2000	Hyacinth Kenny	Mumbai	1000	Ulka S. Chandekar	Nashik	500
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Neha Creado	Mumbai	2000	Darryl/William Fernandes	Thane	1000	Sunil A. Suryawanshi	Pune	500
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Godfrey D'Souza	Mumbai	2000	Arthur B. Rodrigues	Vasai	1000	Machado & Sons Pvt. Ltd.	Tuticorin	500
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BOB'S BANTER

by Robert Clements

Just Walk..!

The disciples were battling a storm on the Sea of Galilee when they saw a figure walking towards them on the water. Terrified, they thought they were seeing a ghost. Then came the reassuring voice of Jesus.

"Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

Peter, never one to miss an opportunity, shouted back, "Lord, if it is You, tell me to come to You on the water."

Jesus answered with just one word.

"Come."

What happened next is one of the most remarkable moments recorded in the Bible. Peter climbed over the side of the boat and walked on water towards Jesus. You can read this extraordinary account in Matthew 14:22 to 33, with Peter actually stepping onto the water in Matthew 14:28 and 29.

Yet whenever we hear this story preached, we

discuss faith. We admire people of faith. We even applaud acts of faith. But when Jesus calls us to step out ourselves, we suddenly become experts at finding excuses.

Our boat may be fear. It may be worry about tomorrow. It may be financial insecurity, illness, disappointment or a relationship that seems impossible to mend. We cling to what feels safe while Jesus quietly says, "Come."

Faith has never meant waiting for the storm to stop. Faith means trusting the One who is Lord of the storm.

Yes, Peter eventually became frightened. He looked at the waves instead of the Saviour and began to sink. But even then, Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him. Peter discovered that while his faith could falter, Christ's grip never would.



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usually rush to the part where Peter looked at the waves, became frightened and started sinking. We are reminded not to take our eyes off Jesus. That is a wonderful lesson, but I sometimes feel we miss the greater miracle.

Peter walked.

Think about that for a moment. Before Peter ever sank, he had already done what no other human being had ever done. He trusted the word of Jesus enough to leave the safety of the boat and step onto the impossible.

The other disciples stayed where they were. They had front row seats to the miracle, but they never experienced it. Peter did.

How often are we exactly like those disciples? We remain inside our comfortable little boats. We

Perhaps today your greatest challenge is not the storm around you but your reluctance to leave the boat. The miracle did not begin when Peter walked. It began when Peter climbed over the side.

Maybe that is exactly what God is asking you to do today.

Stop analysing.

Stop worrying.

Stop waiting for perfect conditions.

Just walk...!

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



July Month
DEDICATION TO
THE
**PRECIOUS
BLOOD**
— OF —
JESUS

"By His blood we have redemption,
the forgiveness of sins."
— Ephesians 1:7



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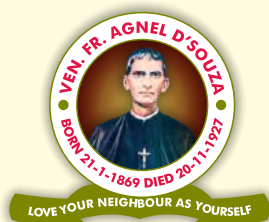


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