

EDUCATION: HUGE IMPACT

ARE OUR INSTITUTIONS CATHOLIC?

SCHIZOPHRENIA: ROOTS & TREATMENT

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A MONTHLY
FOR PERSONAL,
SOCIAL AND
SPIRITUAL
INTEGRATION

MAGNET

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: VISION | ACHIEVEMENTS | CHALLENGES





Catholic Education

"The entire effort of the Catholic teacher is oriented toward an integral formation of each student."

– **William Cardinal Baum**

"Study fatigues the mind and heart. Go to refresh them at the feet of Jesus Christ under the cross; some moments of repose give fresh vigour and new lights."

– **Saint Vincent Ferrer**

"The idea of a Catholic University is about the mission to form students to become holy, well-educated, productive members of the Church and society."

– **Rev Leonard A Kennedy**

"Catholic schools prepare every student to meet the challenges of their future by developing their mind, yes, but also their body and their soul and spirit."

– **David Vitter**

"In every young person, a point of goodness is accessible, and it is the primary duty of the educator to discover that sensitive cord of the heart so as to draw out the best in the young person."

– **Don Bosco**

"A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. A good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints."

– **Pope Benedict XVI**

"Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts, but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the most profound meaning of human freedom."

– **Pope John Paul II**

"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."

– **Unknown**

"Teaching is a beautiful job, as it allows you to see the growth day by day of people entrusted to your care. It is a little like being parents, at least spiritually."

– **Pope Francis**



CATHOLIC EDUCATION: OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION & CURRENT CHALLENGES

Catholic schools—whether in India or around the world—are doing something right if there is such a rush for admissions, even in places where Catholics are a small minority.

Their status and popularity are so proverbial that some privately managed schools in North India add the words “Saint” or “Convent” to their title.

The Catholic church has been a pioneer, a leader and an exemplar in three areas of public service—education, medical care and what is loosely termed social services (care of orphans, destitute children and aged, leprosy patients and other “unwanted” persons).

In India, the vast majority of students in Catholic schools and colleges belong to other faiths. Even many of those who profess affiliation to political parties with different priorities send their children to our institutions. They know that we respect all faiths, do not discriminate, nor pressurize anyone to change their religious faith. They esteem our standards and the discipline.

From the early monastic and cathedral schools, to the medieval European universities, to the vast network of schools, colleges and universities worldwide, the Church has a splendid history in education. Not many know that several of the world’s top-rated universities—Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard—started as seminaries or schools around a church. The three prestigious universities just mentioned have large departments of divinity even now.

It is a core Christian belief—now largely shared by most “advanced” and highly secular societies—that everyone has the right to education, and that a society or nation is best served when its members are educated, rather than kept ignorant and illiterate. The mind, which makes us different from and more powerful than beasts, is our most precious resource. It needs to be cultivated. No computer can match its creativity or potential.

Gadgets come and go, get outdated quickly. The one tool that never becomes obsolete is the human mind—something we share with all other human beings.

In these trying months of the pandemic, there is much talk about online education, when and how far to open schools and colleges, how to pay the teachers with the diminished income, ... It is also a good time for reflecting on:

(1) The so-called normal: Is the earlier “normal” something good to go back to? What are its pros and cons?

(2) Online education: With the widespread access to the Net, should we depend so much on schools and college for learning? How do we bridge the huge digital divide?

(3) If a college or school offers only what I can get on my phone or laptop, why have such institutions? What more can and should such institutions offer, which gadgets cannot?

(4) An international conference on education, held in Canada before the year 2000, discussed: *What should be the goal of education in the twenty-first century?* Answer: *To create the life-long learner.* The “educated person” is not, above all, a “learned” person, but a “perennially learning” person. Are we, educators, such life-long learners? Or do we mostly stagnate and expect the young simply to repeat what we tell them?

In this issue, we learn from six educators worth listening to. Every one of them is a distinguished educator, competent, experienced and esteemed: a University vice-chancellor, two college principals, a college rector and professor, a retired professor, an active teacher gripped by an educational method. I learnt from what they wrote. I am sure you will, too.

They can also help us to ask ourselves some badly needed questions: *Why are we in education? Are we truly educating or simply passing on textbook knowledge of maths, English and biology? What difference do the years spent with us and under our care make to the thousands who attend our schools and colleges? What difference are they making today?*

The goal of Catholic (or any worthwhile and tested) education is *to prepare professionally competent, morally upright and socially conscious leaders who will not only manage their own lives and families responsibly, but also change society for the better.*

Is this what we are aiming for? Is it happening? Or do we define success as simply higher income for those we educate?

In continuation of our February issue, there are three articles on mental illness—a longer one on schizophrenia, a brief “myths versus truths” list, and a look at laws that protect the mentally ill. May they help us to help those who need it most.

FR JOE MANNATH SDB,
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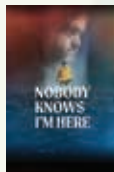
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MAGNET has published twenty-eight very practical articles on Canon Law, all by **Sr Licia SMI**. She made sure to take up topics of interest to religious, and answer to questions in a clear and concise manner. She also got every article checked by an expert in Oriental Canon Law, so that what we publish is valid for religious of both Latin and Oriental Rites. Like all our other columnists, she has done this as a ministry, without receiving any payment for it. She is taking up a new responsibility, and will not be free enough to write regularly for us. THANK YOU, Sr Licia, for your competent and loving service. Many more than we can see have benefited from your labour of love. All the best in your new ministry!



OUR FAVOURITE. WORTH RE-READING.

MAGNET – with an attractive layout, loaded with inspiring and enriching, challenging and enlightening, energizing and enlivening, rich and relevant content, one better than the other; very personal with appealing and attractive language; collection of appropriate and catchy quotes according to the theme; motivating, thought-provoking, soul-touching editorial, exhibiting excellent dose of beauty and colour, joy and happiness, humour and information that makes every issue of Magnet a special one, with lots of food for reflection, wonderful resource for people of all walks of life – that's how I describe this amazing magazine.

MAGNET is very practical, with excellent content and quality, helps us to set our priorities right, questions our core values, disturbs us sometimes, encourages and inspires most of the time, helps us to become more authentic and genuine, to put on our true self, with amazing and inspiring real life stories of people from different walks of life. Every article from cover to cover, from first to the last line and every word has an appeal, with lots of positive and divine vibrations, something very special, something different from any other magazine, attractive and holistic, encompassing everything in a few pages!

MAGNET has enriched my personal life very much and that of my community – strengthened our spiritual life with amazing stories, inspiring testimonies, meaningful articles, guiding us to become fully human and divine. Most of us consider MAGNET to be our favourite magazine. We read it, relish it, cherish it, share it, use some articles for Community meetings and discussions, staff meetings, Student Development Programmes, School Assembly Animations and make use of them for discussions, as they ignite the mind, the heart and the soul.

MAGNET is a great service to all religious communities, to families and individuals. It is not to be read just once, then kept aside; in order to understand, assimilate and make the best of it, we need to read some articles again and again.

For such an amazing, awesome and magnetizing gift, my heart full of gratitude for conceiving MAGNET, bringing it out regularly and faithfully, lockdown or no lockdown, with care and precision, with excellent planning and perfect layout, understanding our likes and our tastes so well, and giving us healthy and tasty nourishment for our minds and our souls.

Sr Celine D'Cunha FMA,
Agartala, Tripura

A TREAT

As soon as MAGNET arrives, my grandchildren grab it for the Fun page. I am a fan of the second page (Inspiration): Beautiful quotes most appropriate for the theme chosen for the month. I am surprised, nay, impressed, to see how a most relevant theme is chosen month and after month, with a cover story presenting it competently. Then I go to Candles in the Dark, and then to all the other features. I would love to mention and compliment each column and writer by name, but that would make this letter too long. I have deep appreciation for each of the columnists. All of them inspire, enlighten and educate. The book and movie reviews bring each issue to an apt finale.

In a nutshell, each issue of MAGNET is a real treat. I really look forward to it every month.

Prof (retd.) Philomina Mathew,
Alleppey, Kerala

RELEVANT & SCIENTIFIC INPUT. ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

I appreciate the articles on mental illness (February 2021). The importance of addressing this issue is slowly becoming more and more evident. People are gradually getting more aware and open about the need to recognize it and to treat it with honesty and through the proper channels.

What you are doing in this magazine is helping this process, especially in our communities but also in our pastoral presences, where many of us are journeying with families who have to face in a more demanding way the challenge of Covid-19.

The other articles are very good, especially the one about governance. They are done in a way that combines scientific accuracy with an easy and accessible style which makes it easy to grasp.

The format also helps those of us who are animating communities, groups or associations in giving a tool for further study and reflection.

In one word: A positive and very much needed contribution

Fr Fabio Attard SDB,
General Councillor for On-going
Formation and Formation of the laity,
Rome

A CREATIVE AND PRECIOUS GIFT

Magnet is a precious gift to the community. We enjoy and find delight in reading it. We, sisters and novices, always eagerly wait for the magazine. Personally I treasure it as a short, quick and best resource material which provides satisfactory explanation on various topics, is thought-provoking and gives lots of deep spiritual insights.

The insights given in MAGNET are clear solutions for daily meaningful living. It gives many answers for the people who struggle and show us how to go about in life. It is colourful, simple, beautiful, clear and enriching, and, at the same time, challenging. It provokes compassion and creative thinking with the real experiences of the people, inspiring interviews, rich inspirational quotes, current and essential information on finance, and bring us up-to-date on mental health and a disciplined living. It brings lots of awareness on the present situation of our society.

My experience of reading magnet is like "eye-opening" and "spiritual awakening." MAGNET is a heart-boosting experience of journey to the centre of a divine fire which vibrates and motivates us. It is, as its caption says, 'A monthly for personal, social, and spiritual integration.' It achieves this with lots of creativity.

Congratulations to the Editor and the team!

Sr Nirmala Vasanthiappan FSI,
Novice Mistress, Bangalore



CROSSWORD PUZZLES & SHOCKING VIOLENCE

BRO CARMEL DUCA MC

I am hooked on crosswords almost to the point of being compulsive. I cannot see one. I get a thrill when I see a black and white grid. I am upset if it is very simple and can spend a long time trying to solve a difficult one. It is the first page I go to when I open any newspaper. But, there is a catch. Crosswords are in the entertainment section of any newspaper be it *The Times of India*, or the *El Comercio* in Perú, or the *LA Times* in Los Angeles. And that, creates a new problem for me as early as eight o'clock in the morning when I sit down and check my new challenge!

You see, I am also addicted to resentments! So, when I start looking at the photos of Chopra-Jonas' wedding at a palace in Jodhpur, or that Virushka had a baby girl, or the type of shampoo you should use on your dog, or the best way to find a serious and honest relationship online, or when the Ambassador of "Timbuktu" gave a big banquet to his so-called friends, my resentments flare up—not because I am against these people, but because, I can never comprehend the absurdities of such news in cities where people are still trying to make ends meet. But that's me!

Little by little I come back to the reality of other type of news—other faces, names and stories which start appearing and entwining into each other. Farmina, who lived with her husband Khurshid in Gurgaon and is being accused of slitting the throats of 7-year old Muskan, 5-year old Miskina, 3-year old Alsifa and an eight-month old. Shib Kumar Gupta, a hardware trader, who after being "upset" with the children who would play at his doorstep, apparently flung



eighteen month-old Shivam from the fourth floor of a central Kolkata building in the beginning of lockdown. The 41-year old homemaker who killed her physically disabled teenage son and then hanged herself hours after attending the funeral of her husband Debnath—a COVID patient. *Amit Agarwal, a 42-year old chartered accountant, who killed his estranged wife Shilpi, another chartered accountant in Bengaluru, and then, after he travelled to Kolkata, killed his mother-in-law.*

And the eternal rhetorical question emerges. Why?

But then, something even scarier starts happening. My vision is dampened, "names" become a blur, and as if in a Harry Potter movie, the letters of the names of these people start scrambling themselves and reposition to read a new name—C-A-R-M-E-L. As if by magic, instead of Amit I started seeing and reading Carmel "who could have killed his fellow community member the day he realised that his brother betrayed him with the authorities." Carmel

instead of Sharmishta "who could have beaten to death the cooks—not for a biryani, but for the times they failed to cook his low fat and low salt food after he was diagnosed with high blood pressure (little did he realise that anger is worse than salt for blood pressure)." The "17-year old student" takes the name of Carmel "another 17 year-old lost and confused about his future after he failed his Advanced Level exams and couldn't get into University that year." Shib Kumar magically becomes Karmenu "when he comes barging out of the room because somebody is talking loudly without taking into consideration that he is trying to take an afternoon nap."

It is scary.

Again, the crossword puzzle comes to my salvation. I am in the here and now. It brings me back to the reality and it is then that something beautiful happens. I am reminded of Thomas Merton's mystical experience. He had it, not in the monastery chapel, but in the middle of a busy street: *"In Louisville, at the corner of*

Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world, the world of renunciation and supposed holiness. The whole illusion of a separate holy existence is a dream. Not that I question the reality of my vocation, or of my monastic life: but the conception of 'separation from the world' that we have in the monastery too easily presents itself as a complete illusion: the illusion that by making vows we become a different species of being, pseudo-angels, 'spiritual men,' men of interior life, what have you. . . I have the immense joy of being man, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now that I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun. . . Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. . . I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other. But this cannot be seen, only believed and 'understood' by a peculiar gift." (Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*). Believe me, I am no Thomas Merton, but, with this insight, hope creeps in.

I am a part of humanity—the broken, frail humanity.

It is at this exact point that I become a "successful" Missionary of Charity because I am in this mess



together with others, together with all those who suffer. (Mind you, I do not need to be in such a mess in order to be a "successful" M.C., but it is definitely an asset.) I am no stranger to suffering because I am part of the human race. Being a religious, being an M.C. (or whatever initials you write behind your name) does not exempt me from the same suffering that people around me go through. I am not immune. And it is there that the greatness of Religious Life should shine—it is this identification with all the people who are suffering.

Our success as religious should not lie in how many so-called "patients" we admit in our "ward" for HIV men, or how many "mentally challenged boys" we have in our "homes," or how many children we have in our English-medium schools (more than the other religious community next door). My success

as a Missionaries of Charity Brother should be measured by my ability to strip myself of the taboos and protocol and literally dance and sing with our "crazy" brothers in our homes. My success as a Missionaries of Charity Brother should be measured by my capability of dealing with tough tattooed "criminals" with the same respect I would show to a bishop or a priest. My success as a Missionaries of Charity Brother should be measured by my level of compassion when sitting down next to a man dying of HIV, holding his hand while he expires. My success as a Missionaries of Charity Brother should be measured by my sensitivity of being able to cry with the one who has nothing to give to his children because he has lost his job and I am as powerless as he is.

This is what I call "success" in religious life! ☺



Bro Carmel Duca MC is a Missionary of Charity (MC) in Kolkata. Worked earlier in prisons in Colombia, Peru, Guatemala and Los Angeles. Originally from Malta.



BISHOPS' AUTHORITY OVER RELIGIOUS

SR LÍCIA SMI

I am Sr Perpetua, a major superior of an indigenous congregation. I would like to know what exactly is the authority of diocesan Bishops over institutes of consecrated life and their members.

This is a relevant question as many major superiors seek guidance on this topic. Since you have not specified whether your institute is of pontifical or diocesan right, we shall discuss areas common to both.

While CIC Canons 586 §§1-2 highlight the obligation of the diocesan bishop to protect and safeguard the autonomy of each religious institute, especially with regard to governance, life, discipline of members, missionary assignments, formation and administration of temporal goods, Canon 678§1 says, "In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate, religious are subject to the authority of the Bishops, whom they are bound to treat with sincere obedience and reverence." This is further clarified in CCEO Canon 415, "All religious are subject to the power of the local hierarchy in matters that pertain to the public celebration of divine worship, to the preaching of the word of God to the people, to the religious and moral education of the Christian faithful, especially of children, catechetical and liturgical

instruction, to the decorum of the clerical state, as well as to various works that regard the apostolate."

There are areas where the religious require the consent or permission of the diocesan bishop. In certain cases, they need to consult him.

CONSENT: The bishop's consent is required in the following cases:

1. For the establishment of a religious house in the diocese, the prior written consent of the diocesan Bishop is required (CIC can. 609 §1; CCEO cann. 436 §2, 509 §1, 556, 566).
2. Exclaustrated religious clerics need the consent of the local Ordinary to remain in the territory (CIC can. 686 §3; CCEO cann. 491, 548§2).

PERMISSION: The following are cases of permission:

1. The diocesan bishop's permission needs to be obtained, if a religious house is to be used for apostolic works other than those for which it was established (CIC can. 612; CCEO cann. 437 §3, 509 §1, 556, 566).
2. The written permission of the diocesan bishop is required in order to build a church attached to the religious house (CIC can. 1215 §3; CCEO can. 870).
3. A dismissed religious cleric cannot exercise sacred orders, unless a bishop permits him to do so (CIC can. 701).

CONSULTATION: In the following two cases, consultation is required:

1. For the suppression of a lawfully established religious house (CIC can. 616; CCEO cann. 510, 556, 566).
2. For a secular cleric to be admitted to the novitiate (CIC can. 644; CCEO can. 452 §1).



Authority to impose penalties:

While CIC Canon 683§2 says that, if the diocesan Bishop becomes aware of abuses and a warning to the religious Superior has been in vain, he can by his own authority deal with the matter. CIC Canon 1320 and CCEO Canon 415§4 reaffirm that, in all matters in which they come under his authority, the diocesan Bishop can apply canonical penalties to the religious who are subject to him. Further, the diocesan bishop can, for a very grave reason, prohibit a member of an institute from living in his diocese, if the major superior has been advised and has neglected to act (CIC can. 679).

Obligations and privileges: The diocesan Bishop is to foster to the greatest extent possible vocations to the institutes of consecrated life and to the missions (CCEO Canon 195; CIC Canon 385). Either personally or through a delegate, the diocesan Bishop can visit churches or oratories to which Christ's faithful have habitual access, schools other than those catering only to the institute's own members, and other works of religion and charity entrusted to religious. He can do this at the time of pastoral visitation, or in a case of necessity (CIC Canon 863 §1; CCEO Canon 415§2). The local Ordinary can prescribe a special collection in churches or oratories regularly open to Christ's faithful belonging to religious institutes (CIC can. 1266; CCEO can. 1014).

An exclaustrated religious remains under the care of their own superior and also the diocesan Bishop (CIC can. 687; CCEO can. 491, 548§2). ^M



Sr Licia SMI is an Executive Member of the UISG (International Union of Superiors General) Council of Canon Lawyers, representing the women religious Canon Lawyers of Asia. She holds a licentiate in Canon Law.



SCHIZOPHRENIA

FR JOSE PARAPPULLY SDB

Part II of the discussion on mental illness presented in the previous issue.

Two Cases

Edward came to therapy because he could not get along with his wife. He believed his wife does not want him to be happy. "She does everything possible to make sure I am not happy," he said. "I am most unfortunate to have married her. She is ruining my life." As an example, he narrated how his wife would deliberately rattle the dishes in the kitchen so that he could not sleep. He believed that she is actually the devil in disguise. As he unfolded his story in subsequent sessions, it became quite evident that he had misgivings not only about his wife, but about almost everyone around him as well. He believed, for instance, that all South Indians were against him because he was a North Indian and were trying to get him into trouble. The woman he worked with at the office was deliberately plotting to get him dismissed from the job. Auto-rickshaw drivers were honking as he passed them on the road to deliberately annoy him. His cousin was turning his aunt against him. His mother-in-law was sending him bad vibes, so that he would get sick and die....

Maryann was brought to therapy by her husband. He had been noticing strange behaviours in her

for a year. She believed that building contractors in the town were out to poison the water supply. She had to protect people against them. God had chosen her specially to do this. She alone had the power to thwart their attempts. She does this with her own specially concocted water that she carries around wherever she goes. She intrudes into the houses of her neighbours and blesses them, assuring them that they will be protected from an impending disaster. She would also see very big ants and scorpions and other dangerous creatures swarming the houses—her own and the neighbours'. When she visited homes, she would point to these non-existing creatures and warn the family to be wary of them. Her actions have alienated the neighbours and affected her family relationships. These beliefs and behaviours began a year earlier, when her husband, who was in the construction business, faced some serious setbacks. Some developers had cheated him, and he suffered a huge loss. The family was thrown into acute financial distress....

Both Edward and Maryann were suffering from Schizophrenia—Edward with paranoid delusions, and Maryann with paranoid and grandiose delusions, as well as hallucinations.

Serious and Dangerous

Schizophrenia (literally, "splitting of the brain") is the most serious of all mental disorders. About twenty million people suffer from it globally. Although not as common as the other major mental disorders, it debilitates people more, affecting their educational and occupational performance, as well as everyday life and relationships. Most beds in mental institutions are filled by patients suffering from this type of disorder. Those who suffer from it are 2-3 times more likely to die early than the general population. An estimated 5%-6% of individuals with schizophrenia die by suicide, a rate that is far greater than the general population, with the highest risk in the early stages of the illness. About one in five attempts suicide on one or more occasions, and many more contemplate suicide, even if not attempting it.

Approximately half of the individuals with schizophrenia have co-occurring mental and/or physical health disorders. Life expectancy is reduced in individuals with schizophrenia because of associated medical conditions. Weight gain, diabetes and heart and lung diseases are more common among those with

schizophrenia than in the general population.

According to *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*, symptoms of schizophrenia typically emerge between the late teens and the mid-30's. Onset prior to adolescence is rare. The onset can be sudden, although in most cases there is a slow and gradual development of a variety of significant signs and symptoms. Males usually have more pre-onset adjustment problems, more prominent negative symptoms and cognitive impairment (described later in the article), and in general worse outcomes than females.

About twenty percent of those who suffer from schizophrenia appear to have a favourable course of recovery and a small number recover completely. However, most individuals with schizophrenia require assistance in daily living and many remain chronically ill, while some experience progressive deterioration.

A Form of Psychosis

Schizophrenia is the main condition in the class of mental illness known as psychosis. However, there are other conditions, such as, bipolar or borderline personality disorder, that have a higher prevalence of psychosis occurrence. Factors such as pregnancy-related depression, disorders of the immune system like HIV or AIDS (and now probably Corona virus), or brain tumors can also present increased susceptibility to psychosis. Psychosis-like states can be caused by medications or drugs, such as LSD, amphetamines, or marijuana in certain individuals.

According to DSM-5, *psychosis is defined by abnormalities in one or more of the following five domains: delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thinking, grossly disorganized or abnormal motor behaviour, and negative symptoms.*

Though psychosis is usually a chronic (enduring) state, some people may only have one episode

of psychosis. This is called *brief psychosis* and can last anywhere from several hours to up to one month. In most cases, the disorder is triggered by a major stress or traumatic event, which is called "*brief reactive psychosis.*" However, it can also occur without a known presence of a stressor.

Full-blown psychosis is often preceded by milder warning signs. These include: problems in sleeping, difficulties in concentration, increased anxiety or depression, isolating oneself, increased paranoid (suspicious) expressions, negligence of normal work and schedules, neglect of personal hygiene, increased sensitivity to sounds, lights, smells, or other sensations and overall apathy. Gradually the more severe symptoms will manifest and become more and more pronounced.



Fantasy versus Reality

The major dynamic in schizophrenia is disruption in an individual's capacity to differentiate fantasy from reality. Fantasy becomes the reality. This leads to a variety of emotional, relational and occupational difficulties and affects daily life significantly.

Those who suffer from schizophrenia may hear voices, see imaginary sights, or believe that other people control their thoughts. These sensations and beliefs can confuse and frighten the person and lead to erratic, and sometimes very bizarre, behaviour. There can be disturbances in the regulation and expression of

affect or emotions, and difficulty in experiencing any pleasure. They have few friends and have difficulty in relating to others, and tend to withdraw from normal socialisation and seek comfort in their inner world of fantasy. They often harbour hostile and angry feelings which they may express in inappropriate ways that alienate those around. All this can lead to a very lonely and unhappy life.

Schizophrenia occurs equally in men and women, although at an earlier age in men. The onset of schizophrenia is usually in late adolescence or early adulthood, but may also occur in later years. Early symptoms may be seen for weeks, months or even years before the first incident of full-blown psychosis. Schizophrenia rarely starts during childhood or after age 45. The period when symptoms first start to arise but has not reached clinically distressing levels is called the *prodromal* period. It can last days, weeks or even years. Subtle changes in cognition, affect and social relationships may precede the actual diagnosis, often by years.

MAJOR SYMPTOMS

Two of the most vivid and conspicuous symptoms of schizophrenia are delusions and hallucinations.

1. Delusions

Delusions are unsubstantiated or incorrect, but deeply held, beliefs about self or others that are sustained in the face of evidence that normally would be sufficient to destroy them. The content of delusions may include a variety of themes, such as persecutory, referential, somatic, religious or grandiose.

In *persecutory delusions* (also known as *paranoid*), the belief is that one is going to be harmed, harassed, and so on by an individual, organization, or group. One might believe, for example, that a plot is being hatched to kill him or her, or that someone is keeping them under surveillance, and following

them everywhere while remaining invisible. In *delusions of grandiosity* one might believe that he or she is really the president of the country, a king/queen, or the Pope, or even God, or the recipient of special privileges not given to others, or has exceptional exclusive powers. In what are called *referential delusions* one believes that certain gestures, comments and so on are specifically directed to himself or herself. For example, one might believe that the news reader on TV is providing coded messages to him or her. In *somatic delusions* one's focus is on preoccupations regarding health and organ functions.

Delusions are deemed *bizarre* when their content is clearly implausible. One may, for example, believe that someone is removing thoughts from his or her brain (*thought removal*) and replacing them with other thoughts (*thought insertion*) or that a stranger has removed their internal organs and replaced them with someone else's organs without leaving any wounds or scars. These beliefs may sound bizarre to others, but are very real to those who suffer from them, and no one can convince them about their bizarreness or improbability. An illustrative example is that of Sister Florence.

Sr Florence's community members noticed that she had been behaving oddly for some days. She spent most of the time in her room, not coming for community prayers and even meals. When she did spend time with community, she would talk about Jesus appearing to her and giving her messages for the Pope. She insisted that she had to go to Rome and give the message personally to the Pope. She was spending more time in her room because it is there that Jesus was appearing to her. The superior, who had some psychology background, suspected some mental derangement, and wanted to take her to a doctor. Florence insisted there was nothing wrong with her, and that she was a chosen person. Fortunately,

the superior remembered that Florence had complained of severe headaches sometime earlier. On the pretext of taking her to see a doctor for her headaches, she tried again to get Florence to see a psychiatrist. One morning the superior went to Florence's room to convince her to go to a doctor. She was surprised to see Florence kneeling in front of an empty chair in the corner, her face animated. "Sister, please kneel down. Jesus is sitting in that chair. Don't you see him?" she said. ... Florence was suffering from full-blown schizophrenia with visual and auditory hallucinations and having the grandiose delusion of being a person specially chosen by Jesus.

One form of delusion that occurs especially among women (also religious women!) is that of being specially loved by someone. This form is known as *erotomanic delusions*. The delusional system becomes fixated upon one individual, usually an older male, and usually of a higher status, but can also be a complete stranger. The woman feels that this man has fallen in love with her and is communicating this love through various secret signs and signals. Paradoxically, she may also experience intense rage against the object of her delusion, at imagined perception of rejection, or as reaction to even trivial slights.

2. Hallucinations

In hallucination, the person experiences an auditory (hearing voices), visual (seeing imaginary sights), tactile (feeling sensations

on the body), or olfactory (related to smells) sensation that has no basis in reality, that is, happening without an external stimulus. But to the individual these have a compelling sense of reality. To the individual, these are vivid and clear like normal perceptions, and not under voluntary control. For example, one might report hearing voices when there is no one present, or claim to see objects not perceived by others. Auditory hallucinations, such as mentioned above, are the most common. Tragic consequences of auditory hallucinations are illustrated in the case of Sunil.

Sunil lives in a first floor room, while other members of the family stay on the ground floor. He usually gets up early to go for his job, and eats with the family before going. When he did not come down for breakfast one day, his brother went to his room and found him in a pool of blood, with a gash in his throat and a blade nearby. He had cut his throat. He was rushed to the hospital. Fortunately, he survived the surgery. He later told a psychiatrist that he had been hearing a woman's voice telling him that he must cut his throat and sacrifice himself; otherwise, his



house would collapse when his family was asleep, and kill them all. He had resisted the voice for a long time. But ultimately, when he could not bear the incessant ominous warnings, he did what he heard was being told to him. He was suffering from auditory hallucinations which, as this case illustrates, can often lead to tragic or bizarre behaviour. He is now living a somewhat normal life with the help of medication, and has to continue taking it daily. If not, the “voice” may return.

The nature and content of both delusions and hallucinations are influenced by a person’s values and personal experiences. Thus, religious people often have delusions and hallucinations with a religious content, as was the case of Sr Florence. Edward’s delusions were coloured by his unhappiness in marriage, and Maryann’s by her husband’s business collapse.

3. Catatonia

Those suffering from schizophrenia may also engage in bizarre posturing and inappropriate behaviour. In what is known as *catatonic* schizophrenia, a person may remain in a freeze position, for instance, with no movement at all, with a fixed stare, arms raised in an awkward position, and so on, for a very long time, resisting any attempt by others to stop them. There can be a complete lack of verbal or movement responses. On the other hand, the person may keep repeating the same gesture or movement for a long time meaninglessly. Classic portrayals of these are found in the movies *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *Patch Adams*.

4. Disorganized Schizophrenia

In this form of schizophrenia, a person may burst into laughter, grimaces, or giggles without an appropriate stimulus. Another example is of a person on the street talking to himself or herself, gesticulating to no one in particular, or directing the traffic even when a police person is doing it, sometimes imitating the police. Or, we may find

the person looking up to the sky, gesticulating and castigating God. Persons affected by this form of schizophrenia may look markedly disheveled, dress in unusual ways, or display clearly inappropriate sexual behaviour in public. Their behaviours can also be unpredictable, such as, suddenly becoming agitated, swearing and screaming loudly.

5. Negative Symptoms

There are also what are known as “negative symptoms.” These are so called because they are an absence as much as a presence. These include inexpressive faces, blank looks, monotone and monosyllabic speech, seeming lack of interest in the world and other people, inability to feel pleasure or act spontaneously. Schizophrenia can exist also with these “negative” symptoms without



the more florid “positive” symptoms described above. In this case, the term “simple schizophrenia” is sometimes used. These symptoms, though not as incapacitating as the positive symptoms, can affect occupational life and relationships. These negative symptoms are the main reason why those who suffer from them find difficult to live independently, and manage everyday life.

Primary Dynamic: Distorted Cognition

The cognitive processes (perception, interpretation, judgment and so on) of persons suffering from schizophrenia are seriously impaired. They may have trouble organizing their thoughts or making logical connections. Their mind tends to jump from one unrelated thought to another in a

confusing and bewildering sequence. They may assign special meaning to seemingly everyday words, which only they understand. Those listening to them will have great difficulty in making sense of what they are trying to say. Delusions, hallucinations and behavioral difficulties, as also affective and emotional turbulence, have their roots in impaired cognitive processes. This cognitive impairment is the primary dynamic in schizophrenia.

ROOTS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

As with other mental disorders, genetic (inborn) factors and environment, but more especially biology, appear to be involved. Biological theories include how active and how well certain areas of the brain work, as well as problems with brain chemicals, such as dopamine and glutamate. There may be structural differences, too, like loss of nerve cells that result in larger fluid-filled cavities or “ventricles” in the brain.

Although genetic factors appear to contribute significantly to the onset of the disorder, most individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia have no family history of psychosis. There is also research evidence that *genetic factors alone are not responsible*. For example, identical twins may have the same vulnerability to schizophrenia. However, when they are brought up in different environments, one of the twins may develop schizophrenia, and the other may not.

The vulnerability potential seems to get actualised when the environment is very stressful. *Studies of families of those who suffer from schizophrenia reveal a high incidence of parental psychopathology and disorders of communication which lead to high levels of stress and confusion*. In fact, from a psychodynamic perspective, this family dynamic is considered the trigger that actualises the vulnerability.

The bio-psycho-social model is the best accepted theory for causation of all mental illness, including schizophrenia and depression. That

is, biology (mostly functioning of the brain), psychological dispositions (genetic factors) and socio-cultural realities (the environment), all contribute to mental illness. *Even though an individual may be born with a biological vulnerability toward a mental disorder, whether he or she develops it depends very much on their experiences, and the environment in which they find themselves.*

TREATMENT

Most often, schizophrenia once developed becomes a lifelong condition, but it can be controlled, and in some cases, as mentioned earlier, full recovery is possible. Even when the illness persists, many individuals who have the disorder are able to live normal lives, provided they are regular with their medication and therapy. John Nash, the famous M.I.T., and later, Princeton University mathematician (on whom the Oscar-winning film *A Beautiful Mind* is based) suffered from paranoid schizophrenia for several years and then was able to continue to produce brilliant works and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics, the Abel Prize and other prizes and awards, and honorary doctorates from several universities.

Early intervention has a significant impact on people with schizophrenia. Schizophrenia symptoms are often worse in the early stages of the illness, which is when the risk of suicide is highest. The majority of people with schizophrenia get better over time, not worse. In fact, 20% of people will get better within five years of developing symptoms, provided treatment is sought early and maintained.

Here are the main treatment options.

1. Medication

The primary mode of treatment is through medication. Prescription drugs, usually known as antipsychotics, can reduce symptoms, such as abnormal thinking, hallucinations, and delusions. However, these medications often have troubling and sometimes

dangerous side effects. These include: dizziness, headache, fatigue, nausea, insomnia, dry mouth, weight gain, constipation, tardive dyskinesia (repetitive involuntary movements), low blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythm. In some cases, because of possible complications, blood levels have to be frequently monitored. Fortunately, the newer antipsychotics have fewer and less serious side effects. Still, because of the side effects, many who suffer from it stop taking medications after a while and they relapse into serious symptoms again. But in most cases, *medication is a must to treat schizophrenia*. The challenge is to convince those who suffer from it to be regular with their medications. When the person refuses to take medicines, caregivers often mix them with their food or drink.

2. Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy can help those who suffer from schizophrenia develop better ways to recognise and handle their problem behaviours, manage their thoughts, and improve how they relate to others. The earlier the treatment is sought, the better the outcome. One of the most frequently used approaches is *cognitive behavioral therapy* (CBT), in which people learn to test the reality of their thoughts and better manage symptoms, clarify confusion and overcome self-defeating thoughts. *Family therapy* helps to improve family members' relationship with the person having the disorder, as well relationships among members, especially to help families avoid both angry confrontations and equally harmful emotional distancing. Other forms of therapy take a psycho-educational approach that aims to improve self-care, communication, and behaviour and relationship skills in general.



3. Milieu Therapy

Among the treatment approaches one that shows most impact is what is known as *milieu therapy*, usually carried out in hospitals and community mental care centres. The goal is to create an environment in which those who suffer from the disorder can practise a number of social skills, engage in various activities, including games, learn some handicrafts, and make themselves gainfully employed. They will be taught how to do everyday things, such as, the use of public transportation, managing money, shopping for groceries and other goods, or finding and keeping a job. They will also be taking medication and engaging in psychotherapy.

4. Food and Vitamins

Foods that contain important vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats are good for schizophrenia. These types of foods help support the brain and the immune system, which can lower the intensity of the symptoms and enhance the body's capacity to respond to medications.

There is some research that suggests certain vitamins can be helpful, especially Vitamin D, various B vitamins, Vitamin C and Vitamin E.

In one word: schizophrenia can hit anyone, and the results are distressing. But great improvement or even complete recovery is possible, through a combination of medication, healthy diet, psychological support, and creating a caring environment. ☐



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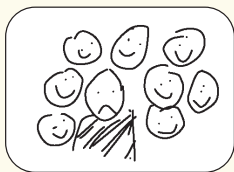
MENTAL ILLNESS: MYTHS & FACTS

Text and Cartoons by

FR JOE MANNATH SDB

Here is a quick look at fifteen myths—false and misleading ideas—about mental illness, which can harm those affected and prevent the rest of us from doing what we can.

MYTH 1: *MI is rare. Affects very few people*



FACT: As shown in our February and March issues, mental illness affects more people

than we may be aware of. According to some studies, one in four persons suffer from some form of mental illness. In India, it is likely that we do not have exact figures, but those suffering from mental illness will be in the millions.

MYTH 2: *MI is inborn. Nothing can be done about it.*



FACT: This is largely false. A few persons may have inherited tendencies towards some

mental illnesses (e.g., bipolar illness), but mental illness can be caused or aggravated—just like physical illness—by the environment and by events, such as, the death of dear ones, a natural calamity (like the Tsunami), sexual or physical abuse.

MYTH 3: *MI means that the person is “crazy” (mad).*



FACT: This is not true at all! Just as we can get different types of bodily ailments—cold,

heart disease—a person can have

a type of mental illness, e.g., severe depression, and able to go about their work, and function normally in many areas of life. A mental illness, like physical ailments, can be mild, moderate or severe.

MYTH 4: *MI makes the person violent.*



FACT: The truth is that a mentally ill person is more likely to be a victim of violence

(e.g., rape) than the perpetrator of violence! American studies show that only 3 to 5 percent of the violent crimes were committed by mentally abnormal persons. So, there is no need to lock up most mentally ill persons in special institutions. One study shows that only one in a thousand mentally ill persons need to be restrained this way. The danger of violence occurs when a person has more than one mental illness, e.g., schizophrenia and bipolar disease, and both in a severe degree.

MYTH 5: *MI cannot be prevented. Some are born this way.*

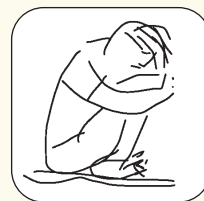


FACT: No! In fact, a healthy, supportive environment promotes mental health, and prevents the occurrence of mental illness. Most of us were fortunate

to have grown up in reasonably secure and caring settings. Had we been in tougher settings, who knows how our mental health would have been!

MYTH 6: *MI shows weak will power.*

FACT: MI is not the fruit of weak will power, and is not cured by appealing



to the person's will power. Thus, for instance, if someone is severely depressed, we cannot expect

him/her to just snap out of it through sheer will power. There is probably a chemical imbalance in the brain, for which medication is needed. So, too, if the MI was caused or aggravated by trauma, bereavement, abuse or tragedy, we cannot blame the person for being weak-willed.

MYTH 7: *MI will last life-long. Such persons will not recover.*



FACT: Here again, the parallel is physical illness. Just as we cannot say that someone will

not recover from malaria or heart surgery or TB, we should not brand a person as mentally ill, and consider him/her a hopeless case. No! Treatment is available. Most cases of MI are manageable and curable.

MYTH 8: *MI does not affect children.*



FACT: Most of those being treated for MI are not children, but signs of MI have been found in people before the

age of fourteen. So, too, a caring and supportive environment in childhood matters much for our mental health.

MYTH 9: *MI does not affect adolescents and youth.*

FACT: Here, the findings are striking. Studies show that one out of eight or ten adolescents is affected by MI.



A number of them injure themselves physically, e.g., by cutting their hands. A tragic truth is that the third highest

number of adolescent deaths is by suicide! Another sad fact is that the percentage of unhappy young people has gone up. Why? One of the main reasons is the growth of screen time (social media) and neglect of people time. Today's youngsters, as we know, spend much time on their smart phones and other gadgets and less time in direct contact with people. Research has shown repeatedly that young people who spend most screen time are the most depressed, and have higher suicide rates. So, this is not something to take lightly.

MYTH 10: *Just take a pill! No need of any other help.*



FACT: No! While medication does help in treating some forms of mental illness, the best is a combination of

medication and therapy—plus a supportive environment, such as a loving family or friends, or other caring people the person can approach. While “the pill” can reduce the symptoms, it does not remove the underlying cause of the problem.

MYTH 11: *A person with MI cannot do a job properly.*



FACT: Just as a person with diabetes or some other physical illness can work responsibly, a person suffering from mental

illness can do normal work, especially if the illness is mild or moderate. In

fact, there have been outstanding achievers in various fields who suffered from depression or bipolar disease or other mentally debilitating ailments.

MYTH 12: *I cannot help someone with MI.*



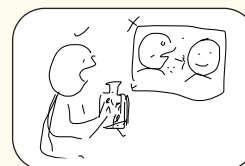
we are there for them. By taking time to be with them. By telling them sincerely words like: “I really care about you,” “Thank you for telling me your problem,” “Let us do all we can to get you back in top form.” One thing to avoid at all costs is to identify them with their symptom. When your family member or close friend has heart surgery, you don’t think of him/her as “that heart patient,” but as Peter or Mary or your wife or husband. In the same way, we should not think of anyone as crazy or mentally ill, or simply as a case of depression or whatever. Such tagging closes our minds, and is unfair to the person concerned.

MYTH 13: *MI is the result of possession by an evil spirit or by the spirit of a dead person.*



FACT: This is superstition! So many sick persons have suffered from physical and social abuse because of this, and were subjected to cruel treatments. The truth is that, just as any of us can develop a bodily ailment, we can be affected by a mental illness. Just as none of us has a body that is 100% fit, no one is mentally or emotionally perfect. We all have some defects and quirks. What people need is support and treatment, not being branded as possessed.

MYTH 14: *MI needs psychiatric treatment, not counselling or therapy.*



FACT: A mentally challenged person needs both. As I have said

earlier, medicines can reduce the symptoms and make the patient more comfortable. Counselling and therapy (caring relationships in general and spiritual support systems) can help them to look at the problem more calmly and confidently, and develop healthier ways of living and relating. Pills and personal presence serve different purposes.


MYTH 15: *PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) is a MI that affects only the military.*



FACT: No! Any of us can suffer from it. Just as a soldier

who has witnessed (or perpetrated or been part of) severe cruelty can get nightmares, flashbacks and panic attacks, the same can happen to a victim of rape, for instance, or to those who have seen their relatives being swept away by the Tsunami. Trauma and the resultant stress are not restricted to any profession or setting.

* * *

May these clarifications of myths and facts about mental illness not end up as a riddle to solve, but as necessary information for handling a human problem that can affect any of us, and does affect a larger number of our brothers and sisters than we may be aware of. The more we know, the better prepared we are to handle mental illness. More truly, if our knowledge is at the service of a caring heart, we will not only take responsible care of ourselves; we will be more effective healers for many. 

CATHOLIC PRESENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

COVER STORY - 1

St. XAVIER'S UNIVERSITY

FR J FELIX RAJ SJ



Christianity is said to have been introduced in India in the first century by St Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, who might have landed on the Malabar Coast in AD 52. Christianity is the first foreign religion to be introduced to the natives of this country. It is today the third largest religion in India, making up to 2.35% of the total population.

The Catholic faith is today practiced by over 19.91 million people in India, which represents just 1.55% of the total Indian population, and 65% of the total Christian population. Most Catholics reside in South India, with significant numbers in North East India. Though Catholics are a small minority community in India, their contributions in the fields of education, culture and languages, health care, social services, administration, defence, and tribal welfare and development are significant and well known.

Catholic Education: Numbers and Quality

Education is central to sustainable and overall development. It empowers people and builds a nation. Investment in education benefits the individual, society and the world as a whole. Education is the answer to many socio-economic and political problems.

Catholic involvement in educational work in India has a long history. It is part of the larger educational system in the country. The original purpose of Catholic institutions was to impart education to Catholic children, but, in due course of time, it was extended to children of other faiths as well.

Francis Xavier set foot on Indian soil in May 1542. He took charge of the College of St Paul in Goa in 1544, founded by a group of Portuguese in 1541. This college was the first Catholic educational institution in India, which later became the cornerstone of expansive Catholic mission in education.

A second attempt was made when the Jesuits were in Agra from 1600 to 1774. Mirza Zul-Qarnain, the adopted son of King Akbar, was a generous benefactor to the Jesuits. With the help of the Mirza foundation, the Jesuits established a "college" in Agra in 1627.

Today, there are 15,618 Catholic educational institutions in India. They represent 1.25 per cent of the total educational institutions in the country, 2 per cent of the colleges and 2.5 per cent of the schools. The Church has been a pioneer in education and a vanguard in providing education to the rural poor, Dalits, tribals and girls. Sixty per cent of the Catholic educational institutions are in the rural areas.

The Catholic Community is in the forefront, considering the number of institutions and the quality of education imparted. The Catholic educational network is the largest private network today in India, with 15,177 schools, 441 colleges and 5 universities, imparting the best-known education. Almost all of them are reputed and highly regarded for their quality, discipline, environment, relationship and research.

By opening the doors of Catholic institutions to all, irrespective of caste, creed, language and sex, the Church has exerted a healthy influence on Indian society. It is believed

that many members of the Indian Constituent Assembly, which included a Jesuit (Fr Jerome D'Souza SJ) were past pupils of Christian institutions. The Constitution of India guarantees the following right: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

According to the NIRF Rankings list, announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India for all higher educational institutions in June 2020, there are 34 Christian Colleges (26 Catholic), including 8 Jesuit Colleges, among the 100 best colleges in India. St Xavier's, Loyola and Don Bosco are popular and iconic brand names sought after by all in India.

The former Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, during his visit to St Xavier's College, Kolkata, in January 2010, on its 150th anniversary, applauded the work of the Christian community: "...the Christian missionaries who came to this country chose the path of education to reach out to the hearts and minds of the Indian people ... Institutions like St Xavier's provide progressive all-round education to the rich and poor, privileged and under-privileged and to the children of all faiths and all religions ... We owe these Fathers a deep debt of gratitude and I salute them for their immense contribution to the intellectual enrichment of the people of our country and to the nation at large..."

CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONAL PRESENCE IN INDIA:

Total Catholic Population in India: 1, 99, 15,148 (19.9 million)
(This is 1.55 percent of the Indian population, and 65 percent of the Christian population of India.)

Catholic Institutions:

Schools:	15,177
Colleges:	441
Universities:	5
Training Institutes:	1,189
Hospitals and Dispensaries:	1,826
Publications:	322

Impact of Catholic Education

With the unfolding of Indian Independence in 1947, the Indian Church took over responsibility for an educational system, which has developed in full vigor as perhaps nowhere else in the world, in a variegated intercultural and interreligious context. India today holds the first place in the whole Church in the number of educational institutions and students.



Catholic education has revolutionized the academic scenario of India, tempering the system of imparting education with values that have become eternal in human

history. Catholic education has produced leaders in every walk of life, and these leaders have furthered and fostered the Christian principles and promoted the welfare of society at large.

Every major town or city in India has either a Catholic school or college. Other religious and secular societies and institutions have adopted Catholic educational methods.

Many teach, but few inspire. Catholic institutions believe that they need to form, not merely inform. This motive dominates the mission.

The comprehensive character of Catholic education has provided a social dimension to education in India. The NSS projects adopted by the Indian Government at the national level have been inspired by this culture of inclusive education offered by the Catholic institutions. The Catholic educators are the makers and markers of a future filled with hope and harmony for the planet we belong to.

That is why the former President of India, Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam applauded the missionaries for their great contribution to the development of education in India. "Being a Jesuit alumnus myself, I am aware of the great contribution of missionary education, not only in India, but around the world," the President said, while speaking at the inauguration of a global conference of the alumni of Jesuit institutions at St Xavier's College, Kolkata in January 2003.

Higher Education Scenario in India

(as in January 2021)

Graduates in India: 86.5 million (9.25% of Indian population)

Colleges of all types (2019): Around 49,480 (including Stand-alone Institutions)

Autonomous Colleges:

780

Students:

37 million

Teachers:

1.56 million

Teacher/Student ratio:

1:23

Central Universities:

54

State Universities:

418

Deemed to be Universities:

125

Private Universities:

370

Total Universities:

967

(Source: Data compiled from sources like www.cbci.in and www.ugc.in)

Catholic Universities in India:

The private sector is strong and potent in Indian higher education. This has been partly due to the Government's decision to encourage private investment and participation. Different state Assemblies took advantage of this initiative and passed private university bills. Only universities established by the Central or State Acts are empowered by the Parliament to confer or grant degrees.

In 2005, there were only twenty private universities in the country, but as of today we have 370 private universities. It is a fact that there has been a quantum leap in the number

of universities, which are the temples of learning. It shows that there is a huge scope for the role of private universities, as India has an immense potential in terms of opportunities in higher education. Private universities can meet this challenge.

In the context of expanding scope, created for private role in higher education, Catholic religious congregations have in recent times started private universities in India. There are five Catholic Universities as of now: Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati (2008); Christ University, Bangalore (2008); Xavier University, Bhubaneswar (2013); St Joseph University, Nagaland (2016) and St Xavier University, Kolkata (2017). The Government of Meghalaya has recently in November 2020 passed the Act for a Jesuit University in Shillong. More Catholic Universities in different parts of India are in the pipeline.


Ignite Young Minds for a Shared Mission!

There is a felt need that the Catholic higher education institutions should take advantage of the freedom and autonomy envisaged by the NEP announced in July 2020 by the Government of India. They must emerge as world class centres of excellence maintaining a global quality benchmark in teaching-learning, research and innovation. They cannot remain as islands any longer. Networking is the mantra of today's success. It is a strategy for mutual expansion and steady progress in their universal mission. It is a facilitating structure of common discernment that allows them to 'work-to-network and network-to-work'.



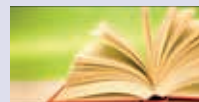
In today's divided and disturbed India, the need of the hour is harmony. The time has come for them to play a prophetic and pro-active role through their educational institutions and collaborations. Inter-religious dialogues and communal harmony must become part of their curriculum, promoting active participation from their students and parents. They must move forward and respond to the changing times and demands with multidisciplinary approach and liberal atmosphere.

The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reveals that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education was 26.5% in 2019-20. The NEP 2020 envisages it to increase to at least 50% by 2035. Catholic engagement in this line will enhance the effort of the government to achieve the desired results with the pursuit of country's overall development.

India is one of the youngest countries in the world—with sixty-five per cent of its population within the working age group of 18 to 59. The young people are the pride and future of India. As Dr Abdul Kalam used to say, 'Our young people must become ignited minds of India, unleashing the power within them. They must think differently, they must have the courage to invent, to travel the unexplored path, to discover the impossible and to conquer the problems and move on.' 



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HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY: CHALLENGES & POSSIBILITIES

SR ANANDA AMRITMAHAL RSCJ

Sahana vavatu sahana bhunaktu saha viryam karvavahe ...: "Let us live together, let us eat together, let us do deeds of valour together." These lines from the Katha Upanishad, uttered in the context of students gathered together to learn, remind us that the physical realities and necessities of life and the intangibles are inextricably linked. They are particularly apposite for educators in the present scenario, both world-wide and in our country. Education has become the last bastion of quality, integrity, justice, compassion, values. Even when these are crumbling everywhere else, it is expected that educational institutions should enshrine these virtues, should live by these principles.

It is a heavy responsibility that we shoulder, especially when we think of those for whom education is a longed-for but distant dream. The grant-in-aid system certainly makes it possible to make education more broad-based, but it carries its own challenges – overflowing classrooms, overworked teachers, admission policies dictated by the state, government and university influence brought to bear on admissions as well as evaluation processes, and many more. How does one continue to impart quality education, continue to ensure that education is more than rote-learning, is indeed empowerment? The new National Education Policy has outlined a road map towards excellence, but there are a number of aspects of it that are a cause for concern. These will need serious attention if our educational institutions are to survive and continue to provide the kind of dedicated service that has been our hallmark. Nor is this all: for all those who are involved in tertiary education as a service, this is increasingly a challenge, since we are faced with a rapidly morphing world. We need to take a number of elements into account in considering this.

Globalized World

A *globalized and complex world* demands an ongoing dialogue between the local and the global. While equipping our institutions and our students to hold their own in the global arena, we are being challenged to hold our local contexts in our consciousness at the same time. The astounding speed of *technological change* requires us to strive to keep up, so that, once again, our institutions and our students are in touch with the latest developments. Educational strategies and methodologies need to be updated all the time, while infrastructural upgrading is constantly required in order that the education we impart is in tune with the best that is available, given our constraints. The COVID19 pandemic has catapulted us into the digital world, and we have been forced to develop new learning-delivery systems and new pedagogies to cope with 'the new normal'.

We see globalization at work in the efforts made by universities and colleges in many parts of the world (including top-level institutions, like Oxford and Harvard)

to try and recruit students from across the globe to a much greater extent than in the past. *International linkages* for faculty and student exchange are also being established (to share research, to offer an international teaching-learning experience), not just with other institutions in the First World, but also with those in countries like India. While physical implementation of these has been currently put on hold, the digital version is being proliferated and is flourishing – witness the burgeoning numbers of international webinars, MOOCs and paid online courses in the last ten months!



Education as Business

More and more, *education is big business*, and *privatisation* is the order of the day with corporate houses, politicians and others entering the field of education. In India, in the past, tertiary education was largely if not wholly funded by the Government (either Central or State) and, hence, fees, whether of the traditional arts, science and commerce courses or professional / technical ones, were comparatively low. More recently, while grants are still given (though often with severe cuts) to those institutions that are already within the aided system, the government is actively encouraging 'fee-paying' unaided courses and institutions. Corporate houses, business families and other private players have been permitted to set up colleges and universities. With enormous financial resources at their command, besides influence at the highest levels, some of these private universities (Symbiosis, Manipal, Dhirubhai Ambani University, O.P. Jindal University, to name just a few) offer the best of infrastructure and state of the art teaching-learning facilities. But, of course, the fees are very high in these private colleges and universities. Those with the means to pay high fees can access the best of higher educational facilities that are available, whether in India or abroad.

Millions without Opportunities

That last sentence raises *the issue of equity*. There are millions of people in our country longing to be able to access the world of higher education, perceiving this to be the

gateway to more opportunities for employment, a better life on the whole. Only an infinitesimal number of these will be able to afford the kind of education implied when we think of education as a business. The question that arises in such a scenario is the relevance of what we have to offer.

Once upon a time, the Catholic education system, operated largely by religious nuns and priests, was in fact the best system available. This no longer holds true in the sense of infrastructure and quality of pedagogy. What then is it that we can offer that is our USP, our invaluable contribution to the young people we seek to serve? *The challenge for us is to ensure that the education we offer is truly transformative and empowering for those to whom we are called through the Gospel imperative.* There are large numbers of people who know themselves devalued and marginalized. How do we accommodate these in our institutions? What strategies can be put in place to ensure that our solidarity with them finds meaningful expression that will work towards a transformation of the situation both at the individual and the systemic levels? Where do we align ourselves in their struggle to find a space and a voice?

Liberal Arts vs Professional Skills

How do we strike a balance between liberal education and the imparting of skills? There is a *blurring of the distinctions between 'academic' and 'professional / technical' education at the tertiary level.* More and more professional or vocational courses are being introduced within the University / collegiate system. The emphasis today seems to be on courses that provide employment skills rather than on the more traditional knowledge-based courses. The demand is to turn out 'industry-ready graduates.' At the same time, there is also a recent trend, less visible, but growing, of once again valuing a liberal education. There are a few new universities and institutes that offer a variety of such courses and the flexibility of choice in order to develop general intellectual capacities; these new Universities, such as Ashoka University in Sonapat, Haryana, offer their students the best of facilities and faculty; but the fees in such Universities are very high, and it is only the elite who can afford to access them.



Social Media Impact

The *mass media and social media* appear to have taken over our thought processes, and issues become known, debated and discarded as passé at the speed of light. The challenge for us is how to use the plethora of knowledge, data and insights that are available at the click of a button, while retaining our autonomy of thought. How do we sustain independent thinking and critical analysis in the face of the onslaught of opinion that we encounter? How do we – and our students – train ourselves to sift through the plethora of

irrelevancies and half-truths, to deconstruct the versions that we are being fed by the media, in order to understand the ways in which we are being manipulated?

There are times when it *appears as if we are walking a tightrope – balancing between responding to the signs of the times, and holding fast to the founding principles and value systems of our institutions.* In the climate of growing fundamentalism and a slow erosion of civil liberties and personal autonomy and privacy, caution and self-preservation necessitate certain choices, while being true to our beliefs demands a more radical stance. But, we are not alone in this.


Healthy Alternatives


While, on the one hand, we see a steep rise in the *consumerist and competitive values* of the dominant mode in society, we also see an *alternate perspective* growing: in movements that support the greening of the environment and challenge the mindless depletion of dwindling natural resources; in attitudes that valorize relationships and connectedness over domination and power; in an approach that accords as much space to emotional sensitivity as to rational intellect; in the efforts to include a more humanistic value-based understanding of success in the syllabi of high profile scientific, technical and management institutions. Is this one of the areas where it would appear that the world is coming around to realize that the values we have striven to uphold and instill in fact are necessary to the survival of the world at a very fundamental level?

Interrelatedness as the Key

Networking and linkages at every level are becoming more and more important, especially as we see the value of connectedness. An interface between industry and education, a collaboration between NGOs and educational institutions, or greater co-operation, nationally and internationally, between educational institutions – all these offer tremendous scope for a vastly enriched and enhanced academic experience.

It is a heavy responsibility that we shoulder, especially when we think of those for whom education is a longed-for but distant dream. Our students are on the threshold: each one of them is a person, unique and individual. Whether or not they articulate it, *they are all struggling with the core questions—Who am I? Where do I fit? It is up to us to encourage them to find their unique identity and recognise that it is shaped through interrelatedness and reciprocity.* To help them move towards responsible adulthood and a sense of purpose and commitment to something beyond themselves.

The new academic year is an occasion to re-examine our educational systems, and to consider anew how we can face the challenges of the present, and equip our students to engage meaningfully with the world around. It is also a time to commit ourselves once again to that call enshrined in the millennium development goals—to that vision of new life and hope which gives us a reason to continue our efforts to make a difference. 



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“CHRIST-IN” EDUCATION

Are we really educators who make a difference?
Here are six tips for making that difference.

FR TOMY AUGUSTINE SDB

If to be Christian means to have ‘Christ in,’ then Christian education is a ‘Christ-in’ education—one in which Christ is seen more than heard, practised more than preached. This means that the educator must have ‘Christ in’ before he/she can give ‘Christ out.’ To have Christ in means to see Christ everywhere. How can we make this happen?

Perhaps, *the first step is to visualise Christ in others—students, staff and parents.* “I see Jesus in every human being,” said St. Teresa of Kolkata, “I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.” This is to be a mystic daily. It leads us to desire deeply their good and to bless them from the heart. Tshering Palden Thinley, a Bhutanese Buddhist alumnus of our college, remembers the respect, cordiality and acceptance she experienced which soothened the initial apprehension she had about joining a Catholic college outside her country.

The second is to bring into the campus the ‘joy of the Gospel’ through one’s joyful life manifested in a smile. I can still see the smiling eyes of Sr Cyriac CMC of happy memory, who taught us science in middle school. The contents may be forgotten, but not her smiling countenance. A smile does the magic of putting others at ease. “We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do,” said St Theresa of Kolkata.

Words matter! They build or break, encourage or discourage. Palden Wangmo thinks it is the

constant words of encouragement she received at college that made her grow from being self-diffident to a self-confident person. Harshness hurts. St Paul warns us, “Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you” (Ephesians 4:29).

Actions are louder than words. When they are done to individuals, they last a life-time. Those involved in education will have many pleasant experiences of being reminded of acts of kindness done to someone which the doers themselves may have forgotten. *Acts of forgiveness and a second chance have reformed several youngsters.* Only the one who has Christ-in will attempt “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Rumden and Manish (names changed) are youngsters who got a second chance and made it in life and are eternally grateful for the same.

Values lived and seen: A prominent leader of the Darjeeling Tea industry, Mr J P Gurung, says he is a Hindu, but the values he lives by he has imbibed from the Christian education he received. The insistence on values of discipline, compassion, integrity, regularity, hard work, and collaboration, Ratika Subba appreciates most about Christian education. Principles and values,

more than rigid rules of discipline, make room for a Christ-in education.

Finally, *the educator needs to find time “to ask, seek and knock”* for one’s students, staff and parents. One must ask on behalf of them; seek the lost without being disheartened and knock at their hearts incessantly until they open up. *Education is a matter of the heart,* as St John Bosco, a proverbially effective educator, reminds us. When all is said and done, there is still need for a quiet, gentle, amiable and serene presence on campus. A marvellous example I can think of is Fr Casper J Miller SJ of St Xavier’s College, Kathmandu, a listening ear and a willing shoulder.

If the curricula and the modern amenities that our institutions provide could be called the hardware of education, then the soft skills and the spiritual skills we employ could be called the software. The former is common to most institutions, but the latter in our institutions should be definitively Christian in character. It does not spring from mere humanism, manifesting in a sort of professional politeness, but from the recognition of Christ in persons we encounter on campus. In other words, *the Christ-in-life of the educator more than captions on the walls will make for Christian education. This is the fifth Gospel—and the only Gospel that most people will read.* ☐



Fr Tomy Augustine SDB is Rector of Salesian College Community in Sonada, Darjeeling, West Bengal. He holds a doctorate in Tibetan Buddhism from Banaras Hindu University. His area of academic interest includes English literature and Indian Philosophy, particularly Buddhism.



HOW CATHOLIC ARE OUR CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS?

PROFESSOR KUNJANNAM ANDREWS

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy,” sang the poet Wordsworth. It need not be for all infants. Each and every baptised child has a right to Christian education. From the security of a home, when the child is transported into a nursery school, the parents expect the child to grow up into a healthy personality. The school starts playing an important role in the life of this growing child. In olden days, in the case of Catholics, admission in a Catholic school run by educated priests and nuns was considered to be a great blessing. When it was time for a Catholic girl to get married, the advertisement in the matrimonial column ‘convent-educated girl’ was highly appreciated by the bridegroom’s party. Girls and boys educated in Catholic schools and colleges had special qualities. They were spiritual, and they appreciated the values inculcated in them in Catholic Institutions.

Today, in following the established process of admission, institutions face rigid constraints and all Catholic students do not get access to Catholic education.

Inspiring Pioneers

As a child, I had the good fortune to study in one of the leading Catholic educational institutions of Kerala, St Teresa’s Convent School, Kochi, run by the Carmelite Sisters. The majority of nuns at that time were Europeans. They were all well versed in the art of teaching, singing, dancing and all other extra curricular activities. Great importance was given to the Catechism classes everyday. The holy nuns inculcated in the students the values of Jesus Christ. Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and attendance at Holy Mass on special feast days was looked forward to with great longing. Everyday a short passage from The Word of God was

read and explained by the sister in the Catechism class. The holiness, kindness and love of the sisters was so transparent that we sat awestruck at their demeanour and the words of wisdom. This much is ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity’ about those good old days – that is, about seventy years back!!

Catholic education in India proper began almost coincident with the starting of the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. The Jesuits, who had returned to India after their temporary eclipse in the church, lost no time in raising the educational institutions to the university level. The reputation which they had already as the educators in Europe stood them in good stead and brought governmental support in abundance. The authorities were quite satisfied that these pioneers in the field of university education were trying to prepare a generation of young men and women who were spiritually inspired, morally upright and socially committed and where virtue and knowledge went hand in hand. The high standards of scholarship and commitment to teaching and training of students which the leaders—both the clergy and the laity—evinced drew accolades from all the sections of the community. Soon the Catholic educational institutions became the most sought after in the country.

Open to All

Though the Catholic education institutions were meant primarily for Catholics, their portals were open to all communities, even to the lowest in the social strata—the scheduled castes and tribes. Their leaders even now recall in gratitude the great service rendered by Catholic Institutions in their emancipation. Most of the national leaders, leaders of the freedom movement had their

early training in Catholic Institutions. Commitment to values, strength of conviction, attitude of justice and fair play, which were the characteristics of these leaders, all sprouted from the early training they received from Catholic educational institutions.

Because of the rush for admissions, alternate modes of education have become a need of the hour. Same is the case with the adult continuing education, which has to cater to those who are forced to withdraw in the face of life’s harsh realities.

Catholic Institutions are yet to answer this call adequately enough to positively address issues of access and inclusiveness at this level. Catholic Institutions are established as a result of a felt need arising out of the community and thus have an obligation towards it. It needs to be seriously reviewed how far institutions are able to step out of the cocooned comfort and reach out to the needy outside without which our Catholic relevance stands challenged.

The Catholic College: Ideals and Failures

Ideally, Catholic institutions of higher education are noteworthy for their high standards. They are considered to be places of learning and research where faith and reason converge. They function in an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel. They are peopled by an act of apostolate of employees bearing testimony by their lives, and by conducting themselves with charity towards each other and to those who seek their services. They are places where highly qualified faculty inspire young minds through their mastery in the art of teaching and their own zeal for learning, where their graduates prove themselves to be outstanding

in learning, ready to undertake the more responsible duties of society and to be witnesses in the world to the true faith. However, these institutions are not immune to the disruptive undercurrents of the world outside. This needs to be addressed urgently in order to maintain catholicity of Catholic institutions.

I would like to point out a few instances of gross violation of human rights and Christian charity on the part of Catholic institutions. A teacher was going for her fourth delivery. During the third delivery, she did not get her pay for maternity leave, because the Indira Gandhi government had passed the law that a couple can have only two children. But, by the time of her fourth delivery, this rule had been repealed by the government. The lecturer, overjoyed at the new law, showed the government order to the principal along with her application for maternity leave. But the principal, who was a nun, looked at her sternly and said, "But we have not received any orders." She was granted maternity leave on loss of pay for three months. It was the duty of the management to get the government order and sanction the maternity leave with full pay.

Another lecturer had asked for five years' leave to go with her husband to take up a foreign assignment. The leave was denied. In those days it was left to the discretion of the management to grant leave or not. The lecturer was holding a permanent post in that college. But her husband, who too was a lecturer in another Catholic college, was granted leave by the management. The wife resigned her permanent job to go with her husband. Within a few months, the husband met with an accident and died. The poor wife with two little children had to come back with a broken heart. She came and asked the principal of the college from where she had resigned whether she could come back and join. There were two vacancies in her department, but the principal did not give the appointment. The principal

who succeeded her was much more human. Thus, we have both witnesses and counter-witnesses in our Catholic institutions.

Vision and Mission

Our institutions are built on three major pillars, namely, Faith, Hope and Charity—faith in Jesus Christ; hope that our teaching will help students to succeed; charity, to serve all those who approach us.

To carry out his vision, we need a mission. Our mission is to go into the world, teach all the nations about the good news that all are called God's beloved children. With this as mission, educational institutions were started by many religious congregations. Some of them have left an indelible mark in the field of education around the world. The Jesuits, the Salesians, the CMI are a few orders to mention. All these institutions started well, their mission being the uplift of the marginalized, the down-trodden through education. They provided high quality education to all, irrespective of their cash, caste, creed, colour, customs, community and credentials; Catholic or non-Catholic, Christian or non-Christian. They gave quality education based on a set of values. They made significant contributions in nation-building and communal peace. On the personal front, the students were taught to promote self-esteem, self-reliance, conflict-resolution, equity, justice, truth and freedom, religious faith, ethics and morals. Many of our alumni and alumnae have fond memories of their time with us, and admire the values we showed and taught them.


Sad Changes

But things are different today. There is a paradigm shift from the old norms. Present educational institutions are mostly result-oriented rather than transformation-

oriented. They have also become market-oriented. Profit at whatever cost seems to be the concern of several institutions. Faith formation, and the eternal values of truth and justice, seem to be outdated values.

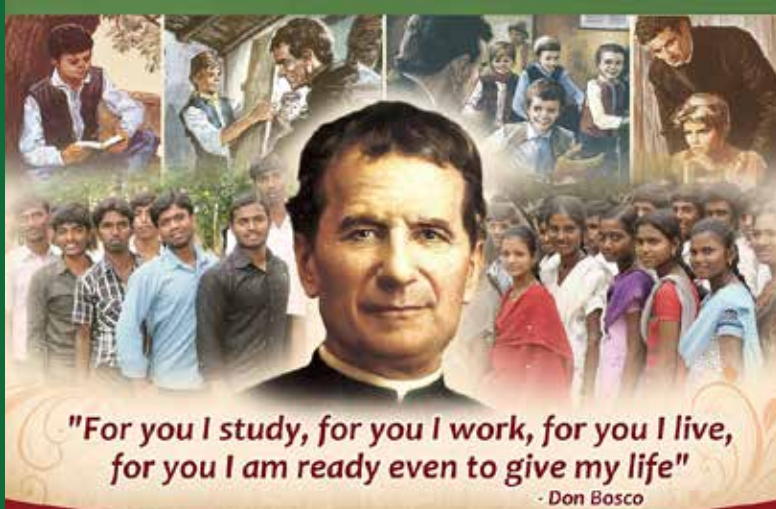
Admissions are often given on the basis of marks, aiming to get good ranking in the educational field. Some institutions have also become money-oriented. This is the worst situation. Corruption, nepotism, political clout can then become the norms for admission. Those who have money find it easier to get a seat. In this process, many of the Catholics who could not compete with the neo-rich in terms of money power were helpless. They were forced to go to schools / colleges which did not offer any Christian values.

At times, students admitted through money power or political influence engage in anti-social activities. Their parents dictate terms which are detrimental to Christian values and their children may become a nuisance to the society. While there are Catholic institutions doing fantastic service and reaching out to the neediest, the greed for money seems to have gripped some. In some cases, buildings after buildings spring up, causing environmental pollution which is against our mission of making this earth a paradise.

It is time to learn from our own best traditions and practices, and to be gripped more fully by a Gospel-inspired vision and a sincere and courageous commitment to mission. Otherwise, why be in education? After all, anyone can run an institution like a business, and there are many others doing this. Aren't we, followers of Jesus, called to be different—true servants of the people, with a preference for the poorest, and living by the values that our Master taught and lived? 



Mrs Kunjannam Andrews retired as Head of the Department of English from St Joseph's College for Women, Alleppey, Kerala. She has thirty-one years of teaching experience at the college level.



THIS SYSTEM WORKS!

MRS JOYCE DE MELLO FERNANDES

A good number of the 'educated' people today owe their education to a Catholic school. They proudly share how their formative years were shaped by Catholic priests, nuns, religious and lay teachers associated with the institution. All educational institutes cater to the academic part of instruction. So, what is it that makes Catholic institutions stand apart? I believe that Catholic institutions do true justice to the meaning of the word "education," which comes from the Latin word *educare*, meaning 'to bring forth.'

We take the child as he/ she comes to us like a sapling. We provide the soil of constancy, the water of instruction, the shade of security and the sunlight of love and acceptance. Sometimes, we have to cut and prune, but we do so with love. All round development and becoming good human beings are given equal importance as is academic excellence.

Today's Students

Today's generation is a generation that has information at its fingertips. The shift from offline to online education has exposed the need to be versatile in reaching the students through any medium, and yes, to get their attention and maintain it. Herein lies the challenge. How does an educator teach the students how to sift through the various gigabytes of information coming their way? How do we train them in the 21st century skills as the NEP 2020 speaks about? How do we move forward?

I say: *We go back.*

We go back to a poor Italian priest who transformed the lives of thousands youth in his lifetime, and whose system of education has been a success in 134 countries around the world: Saint John Bosco, known and loved the world over as Don Bosco.

In visiting Turin's central jail as a young priest, his thought was: "If these men had a friendly guide when they were young, they would not have ended up here." In a setting in which boys worked 12-16 hour working days and received harsh punishments if they erred ("He stole. Send him to jail!"), he stuck to his conviction that youngsters are thoughtless, not evil, and can be won over by love. A love that makes an educator take an active interest in all aspects of a young person's life, and leads to a loving presence all through the day—not just during classes. These views sounded strange foolish and impractical then. No wonder he was ridiculed and even called insane at first, but experience proved him more than right.

The Don Bosco Way

The Don Bosco Way is not a method of teaching a subject; it is a tried and tested system of *building a relationship between student and teacher which transforms and energizes the students to develop all their potentialities – physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social. Its effectiveness has been proved by several thousand Salesian institutions all around the world—and in schools run by Don Bosco alumni.*

Don Bosco believed—and saw from experience—that youngsters respond better to love than to punishments. He emphasized the importance of the educator's caring and active presence in all the activities of the school. "If a teacher is only seen in the classroom, or the priest only in the pulpit, they are seen as just doing their duty. But if they mix with the young in recreation and other activities, the youngsters begin to see them as friends."

Hence outdoor games, music, theatricals and outings are given importance. Today this can spill over to online presentations, radio/ video shows, writing blogs and vlogs. Thus, in its essence, it is an "expressive system." It provides avenues for expression of students' interests and talents, as well as a constructive channel for their energies. Thus, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities form an integral part of education. These activities also provide opportunities for better teacher-student rapport.

Students are always under the loving and vigilant eye of the teacher. This caring presence *prevents* many mishaps. *Better to prevent than to punish after the fault!* And, when they do commit mistakes, the educator can correct them in a loving way. Don Bosco believed that, once the educator wins the love of the pupils, then even a reproachful look, or the withholding of praise will become effective corrective measures. Away with the stick, and angry shouts and humiliating remarks!

In the 1950s, the Italian Government faced a terrible dilemma; how to manage the Reformatory at Arese, Milan. No one could control the young inmates. They killed the director by sinking him in the sceptic tank. The Salesians took up the invitation. Those who volunteered to work there knew they would face extraordinary tough times and danger to their very lives. On their first day in Arese, the Salesians called the young inmates together. The rector showed them a bunch of keys—the keys of the room where all the instruments of punishment were

kept. He handed the keys to a boy, who went and threw them into a well. That is how the new regime started. It was not through threats and beatings that boys who had gone the wrong way would be won back.

Later Italian TV made a film on Arese before and after. How was such a change possible?

The Three Pillars

For this system to work, educators need to put into practice the three principles which form the main pillars of The DON BOSCO WAY, namely, Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness (Rapport).

1. REASON

In today's fast-changing and high-tech world, the young are always questioning and searching for explanations and answers to questions and doubts they are bombarded with through the internet and mass media. It is the duty of the educators to provide this through reason, which signifies good sense and simplicity. If students find their teacher authentic, optimistic and reasonable, they will be willing to listen to and obey in the classroom as well as outside. Through persuasiveness and a spirit of dialogue, the child's conscience is formed, which will gradually lead to personal responsibility and freedom. We must convince them through reason, not impose on them through fear.

2. RELIGION

In our institutions, students of different faiths come together. Educators need to seek the common aspect of every religion. Every religion preaches the core values of Love, Equality, Brotherhood and Peace. For Don Bosco, education is the matter of the heart and no one knows the heart of a child better than God. Only by living a good life guided by God will human beings find happiness and inner peace. No one knows our needs better than God does; no one loves us more deeply than God does.

Religion plays a key role in the life of the educator as well. To quote a practical advice from Don Bosco, "when a boy misbehaves, it is more practical to go to God in humble prayer than to shout at that boy." Do

we pray for our students, especially those who are poorer, weaker, and come from tough backgrounds?

Without formation of conscience, institutions can end up producing clever and capable criminals! Think of Nazi doctors, for instance, who did atrocious experiments on people. They were "well educated," but inhuman.

3. LOVING KINDNESS (RAPPORT)

Loving kindness is the cementing factor that binds the teacher to the student. Don Bosco gives three keys to establishing rapport in any educator student relationship:

- a) "Love what the young love, that they may love what you love."
- b) "It is not enough to love; they must know that they are loved."
- c) "Familiarity breeds confidence. Without confidence, there is no education."



Gone are the days when the teacher had to maintain a distance from his/her students, in a formal education set-up. Today, effective teaching and learning can happen only if there is a good rapport between the two. I've experienced this firsthand. Talking about sports and movies, references to famous songs and even memes can break the ice and bridge the generation gap.

Teaching can end up as a one-way transmission of knowledge from teacher to pupil. *Education, instead, is the ability of the educator to draw out the best from the student.* This requires a genuine interest in their integral development—not just teaching a subject and making sure they pass.



Mrs Joyce D'mello Fernandes has more than thirty years of teaching experience, and considers herself a student for life. She has taught in night schools and regular city schools (Regina Pacis, Convent Girl's High school, Don Bosco Senior Secondary School, Nerul). She is also pursuing a second M.A. at present.

A Special Presence

To achieve this, the PRESENCE of the teacher is essential. This presence should grow from being merely a physical presence to being:

- an ACTIVE PRESENCE, wherein the teacher actively participates in activities of the students. Join in their games, read the books they read, watch the movies they watch.
- an ANIMATING PRESENCE, through which students are encouraged to be creative. The teacher answers questions and is approachable.
- a CHALLENGING PRESENCE, by which students are motivated to set goals and achieve them. The teacher works with them, accompanies and encourages them, to the point where they become the catalysts of change in the society.
- a LIBERATING PRESENCE, which enable students to be free from the shackles of ignorance and immorality. The teacher corrects them in a loving manner, shows them the path and forgives, thereby always keeping the ray of hope of second, third and n number of chances to mend their ways.

Way back in 1883, Don Bosco advised his followers, "*to understand and adapt ourselves to the times in which we live.*" We need to meet the young where they are, as Don Bosco did, not simply wait for them to approach us.

The centre of education—the young person—must pass out of our institutions as a mature, responsible and self-confident adult who can stand firm in his or her convictions in this extremely fast-changing world. This is not Utopia, this is not wishful thinking. This is what Catholic Education is all about. *The goal of education is to produce professionally competent, morally upright, social conscious leaders who will be good human beings and upright citizens, and transform society for the better.*

Are we real educators, or mere teachers of subjects? ☐



MY EXPERIENCE AS A PRINCIPAL

MARIA GORETTI GONSALVES

1. You have been principal of Vidya Bhavan College, Pune. What have been your most rewarding and meaningful experiences as a principal?

The college where I am teaching is a small Diocesan college, where the Management is Catholic, but the staff are government employees, as the college is affiliated to the University. When the principal retired in 2014, I found myself a reluctant candidate for the principal's post. It took me some time to say *Yes* to assuming the position. Why did I hesitate? I could foresee the problems that as a woman I would have to face, in leading an almost entirely male staff (except for two part-time women lecturers who were not permanent staff either). I felt I would be having a tough time dealing with the male staff, particularly the office staff, with the added context of government-paid employees working in a Catholic college set-up.

Secondly, I am basically a teacher, and a passionate one at that, and I had never had any administrative experience before. So, the prospect of taking up administration wasn't exactly attractive to me. It was, therefore, with much reluctance and lots of reservations that I assumed the reins of college management. However, I soon realized that being a woman having to handle mainly male

staff was not so bad after all. In fact, in some ways, it was an advantage. As a woman, I found it easy to communicate both formally and informally with the staff. I started to have regular meetings with the staff to sort out some contentious issues that I had inherited with the post, and little by little some of the conflictive situations were settled amicably.

Relational issues between some of the staff also improved with time, and the cold wars and walls that had seemed impregnable started to crumble. Although I can't say it was plain sailing, the communication channels were in place to dialogue and bring about mutual understanding and unity among the staff. The charged atmosphere somehow gave way to a more relaxed atmosphere and friendship emerged in places where there had been animosity earlier.

One of my learning experiences has been the cultivation of an open and healthy organisational culture. In my experience, a positive organisational culture can only be built on trust and empowerment. Both are needed for any institution to take off. *Empowerment of the employees is built on entrusting them with responsibility and giving them the scope to carry it out.* However, this is easier said than done, as at times painful experiences of betrayed

trust act as a deterrent to trusting further. But *the benefits derived from trust are much greater than the risks involved in trusting.* I can vouch that trust and transparency did a lot in breaking down walls of doubt and suspicion and forging effective work relationships and team spirit.

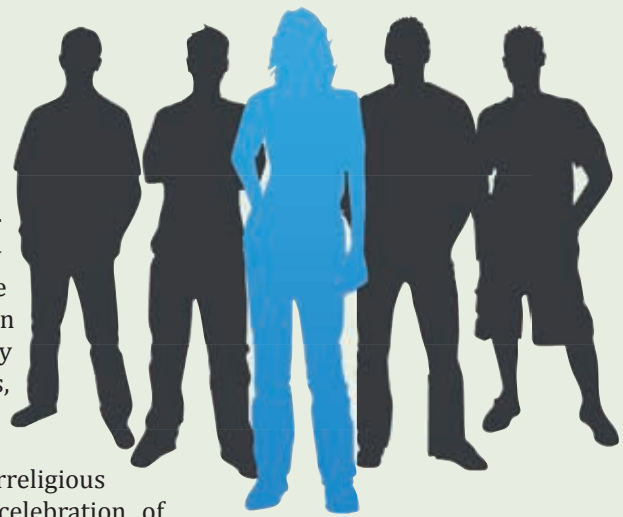
Being small in size, our college has a close-knit familial culture. A student is not just a number in a register as is the case in many big colleges. Every student is known by name and face, something that perhaps a big college would find difficult to emulate. The personal attention and care nurtured a strong identity and sense of belonging among the students which is palpable even to a casual visitor.

Another important aspect of college management that I found particularly important was the aligning of planned activities annually with the Vision and Mission of the college. This was done with the help of combined teams of both staff and students. Though the plan was made jointly, most of the activities were carried out with great enthusiasm and creativity by the students themselves. They would suggest the themes and the activities and then get involved in carrying them out with a great sense of ownership and enthusiasm.

2. What difference can a Catholic school or college make today?

In India, as we all know, the contribution of the Catholic Church and Institutions to the field of education is extremely significant. Even today, when education has become so commercialised and is big business, the dedication shown by Catholic institutions can hardly be found in the best of other institutions, even when they boast of their brand.

Catholic schools and colleges therefore have an important mission of preparing students not just for an exam or for securing high grades and earning a good name for the institution, but for life itself.



A Catholic college should firstly take a preferential option for the poorer sections of society and follow a policy of admitting those who may not necessarily have a high percentage but need to have the opportunity of a good education to go up in life. While the well-off can always buy a seat, the poor often are deprived of it as they can't afford to even pay the normal fees.

A focus on the person is another important aspect that cannot be over-emphasised in a Catholic college. For followers of Jesus, who became one of us to share God's love with us, the dignity of the human person is fundamental. This is, in my experience, the uniqueness of Catholic colleges. Students who graduate from them are grateful for the personal attention and care they received from the faculty, through imparting of the content as well as extra-curricular activities. We organize wide ranging activities to draw out the best in students in a holistic manner, through personality development, value education, building up and show-casing of talent, skills and social outreach activities. Such activities provide for their all-round growth and offer ample opportunities to build up their self-esteem and self-confidence, while inculcating a desire to contribute their mite in service to society, particularly to the less privileged.

In today's confusing world, the importance of counselling can hardly be exaggerated. Some young persons may need guidance for academic or career matters, while others are grappling with serious issues of depression or even despair. In my opinion, counselling should be made obligatory, since a young person may not know the importance of it till he or she experiences it at least once.

And how can the spiritual dimension in a Catholic college be neglected? The building of spiritual, moral and social values

is the foundation for personal integrity and commitment. The spiritual dimension may be looked after by liturgical celebrations, the Eucharist, retreats or recollections for the students, interreligious events and prayers, celebration of feasts of all religions, and so on.

One little practice that I found very effective was the One Minute Silence with which I would start my class. This simple meditation aims at creating an awareness through breathing, in order to focus oneself and bring about a deeper level of consciousness. I would end it with a petition to God for blessings on oneself, one's family, society and world. Initially, the students found it uncomfortable to be still and to close their eyes; some would be squirming through the process. But eventually they would look forward to it and told me it was a beneficial practice.

A Catholic college surely aspires that their students would be equipped to face the challenges of life and bring meaning to the lives of others as a consequence of it.

3. Online Ed: Many students are bored with it; those in rural areas are not connected well; poorer people do not have smart phones or tablets or laptops. How can we best meet the present situation?

In the situation of the pandemic, schools and colleges have been forced into the on-line teaching mode. This is a great challenge to the management and faculty of the colleges and institutions. Students in senior college were already in possession of android phones, at least in most of the

city colleges. However, connectivity is poor, and in many cases, Wi-Fi is not affordable. Students depend on the mobile data for attending classes, downloading their notes, uploading their assignments and answering on-line exams. Students living in rural areas and remote places may not have the proper devices nor the required connectivity which creates difficulty in accessing the classes and therefore they are missing out on the educational experience altogether. How long will this situation last and what will be the new normal once it is behind us, is still anyone's guess. Until such time, teachers and students alike have to just make the most of it and hope to make up for lost time and opportunities for learning.

4. If you were to make one suggestion to educators (especially to those heading institutions), what would that be?

Create a sense of ownership in your staff and your team by inclusive policies and techniques. Staff members should not be subject to discriminatory attitudes or actions on the part of the head of the institution. If you can get everyone onboard, you can be sure that your institution will take off trusting in Divine Providence and the collaboration of a motivated team of staff and students. ☐



Dr Maria Goretti Gonsalves is ex-Principal of the Vidya Bhavan College of Commerce, Pune, India. She is keenly interested in the education and all-round growth and development of youth and families. She is a member of the Teresian Association, an international association for the laity and is presently on the General Council of the Association.



CHARITABLE PURPOSE: OBJECT CLAUSE

(PART 2)

FR TREVOR D'SOUZA OFM

In continuation of the Finance column in the February issue, this article explains "object clause" more thoroughly.

The "object clause" forms the heart of the Memorandum of Association (MA) or Trust Deed (TD). The main reason for the entity coming into existence is to carry out the purposes/objects laid down in the object clause. The objects should be drafted in a very simple, clear and unambiguous language. The objects should clearly portray the intentions of the subscribers to the MA and the settlor of the Trust. Much attention and thought should be invested in drafting the objects.

OBJECT CLAUSE UNDER THE INCOME TAX ACT

Under the IT Act 1961, it is necessary for the entity to be registered under sections 10(23) and/or 12A to be designated as a notified or approved entity. This registration entitles the society or trust to file its return as a charitable / religious / public utility entity and avail the benefits thereunder. The registration under the above sections is granted based solely on the objects of the entity. The income tax officials will thoroughly examine the objects and then classify the entity as charitable / religious / public utility. Once this registration is granted, then the entity acquires the *identity* and *tag* noted in the certificate. As 12A is a basic registration, the classification it receives matters.

Once the 12A registration is completed, the entity is obliged to utilise its funds only for carrying out the objects noted in the MA and TD.

An entity cannot utilise its funds for objects not mentioned in its object clause. An entity cannot subsequently enlarge the scope of objects, on its own accord, without first amending the object clause.

Over the years, the law has been tightened to ensure that any amendment to the object clause gets linked with the 12A registration. Therefore, the procedure for amendment of the object clause requires the prior approval of the Commissioner of Income Tax and may also require the entity to go through the procedure of re-registration under section 12A of the IT Act. The logic followed here is that the certificate under 12A was granted based on the objects of the entity and hence any change in the objects will need to be approved by the IT Department for the 12A to be valid after amendments of the objects.

OBJECTIVES UNDER FCRA

The FC Act and Rules permit an association to receive Foreign Contributions (FC) for carrying out Education, Medical, Cultural, Social and Religious activities and programmes. The purposes or objectives for which the association wishes to receive FC should be mentioned in the application form and supported by the object clause of the entity's MA or TD. After being granted permission to receive FC, the association has to *specify and disclose* to the banker and in the FC

quarterly returns the *purpose* of the contribution received. It is the duty of the office bearers of the association to ensure that the FC received is utilized strictly according to the purpose mentioned in the letter of donation and the declaration to the banker. There is very little scope for the association to utilize the amount received, surplus or unspent balance of the funds, for *any other purposes* other than the purpose for which it was received.

Further, FC funds shall not be utilized for any *speculative investments*, including investment in mutual funds. There is also an upper limit of 20% of the FC that can be utilized for administrative purposes. Any violation in utilizing the fund can lead to penalties, suspension and even cancellation of the permission to receive foreign contributions.

GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING

(1) *The object clause can be divided into two parts, the Main objects and the Ancillary objects. The main objects refer to the core vision of the entity, while the ancillary objects refer to those activities that will help in realizing the main object. For example, if the main object is promotion of education, then the ancillary objects will be running of schools and colleges, construction of buildings, printing, ... The main object/s should be supported by ancillary object/s, without which the main object cannot be fully realized.*



One should not refer or confuse the ancillary object as the main object of the entity.

(2) *The headings mentioned by the IT Act and FCRA* can be used while drafting the object clause. It is good and proper for the objects to be arranged according to the headings, such as Education, Medical Relief, Relief of the Poor, Yoga, Public Utility Services, etc. It is not a good practice to cluster all the objectives in one or two paragraphs or to camouflage the object/s under vague words and statements. Clarity of the objective should be the norm to be followed in drafting the same.

(3) *List out all the possible objectives in the MA or TD* that the entity wishes to carry out during its life time. It is not necessary that the entity perform all the objectives mentioned in the object clause all the time. It is sufficient even if one of the objectives is being realized at any particular time. Other objects can become operative as and when possible. However, if the object is not listed or mentioned in the MA and TD, then it becomes impossible to carry it out when a particular situation arises, unless the object clause is amended. As noted earlier, the procedure for amendment and its approval is laborious.

(4) *The objects should be practical and doable.* It is difficult and practically impossible to carry out utopian

objectives. The objects should be drafted with a long-term perspective, and should be relevant for the life of the entity.

(5) The objects should be drafted in words which are general at the same time specific. Use of the words, “for example” or “such as” help to understand the general statement in a better way. Statements like, “any other similar activities ...” should be used with prudence.

(6) *Get different persons to read the objectives* drafted to ensure that the draft carries the same meanings as intended. Do not simply and blindly go by what is provided by the “experts” as often these are ready-made, cut-and-paste drafts which may not be relevant for a particular entity.

OBJECT CLAUSE AND ACCOUNTING

The object clause should also help in designing the accounting system of the entity. The heads of accounts will follow the object being realised. For example, let us assume that two main objectives are being realized at the same time, say, Education and Medical Relief. In this case, each objective will be one head of account with its relevant sub-heads. Salaries paid to the teachers and medical staff will *not* be accounted under a general head, “Salary and Wages,” but will be accounted as a sub-head under the main heads Education and Medical Relief respectively. When the objectives are clear, the accounting becomes clear and this facilitates good governance in terms

of budgeting, costing, cash-flows, etc. When the objects are all bundled into one statement, then the accounts also tend to get bundled up into common heads making planning, management and governance difficult.

DUTY OF THE MANAGEMENT

There is a distinction between being a Church-based organization (Diocese or Congregation) and a Civil Entity (Society or Trust). While the former two are primarily governed by Canon Law, the latter two are governed by Civil Law. Further, in church-based organizations, there is regular change of officer bearers, some of whom may also be the office bearers of the civil entity. Further, there is also a difference in the understanding of “charity” by the church and under civil law. For the management of our civil entities, the understanding of “charity” given by the courts and under civil law will prevail.

Taking the above aspects into consideration, it is important that the office bearers of the civil entities must be thorough with the object clause of the entity under their governance. As they are the persons making decisions on the utilization of the funds under their governance, they also become responsible to ensure that the funds are applied only toward the objects of the civil entity. Every time a major financial decision is being considered, it would be wise to refer the object clause and make certain that their decision is within the framework of the objectives. ■



Fr Trevor D'Souza OFM is a Franciscan priest and Chartered Accountant. He provides courses and regular updates on financial-legal matters. He is involved in pastoral works, preaching, retreats, moderating chapters and spiritual direction, as well as the new evangelization through the internet. E-mail: tdsofm@yahoo.com

Ten differences:
(1) Stripe on first girl's shirt; (2) second girl's hair;
(3) first boy's collar; (4) second boy's sleeve;
(5) book under his elbow; (6) teacher's sari stripe;
(7) stripe on sleeve; (8) lines in book; (9) ring on finger;
(10) AND changed to &

Solutions to Fun & More
Answer : WHEAT
I am a word of 5 letters -WHEAT
Everybody eats me..
If you remove my first letter, I will be a form of energy- HEAT
If you remove my first 2 letters, I will be needed for living-EAT
If you remove my first 3 letters, I will be a preposition and near you-AT
If you remove my 4 first letters, I will be a drink for you-T(tea)

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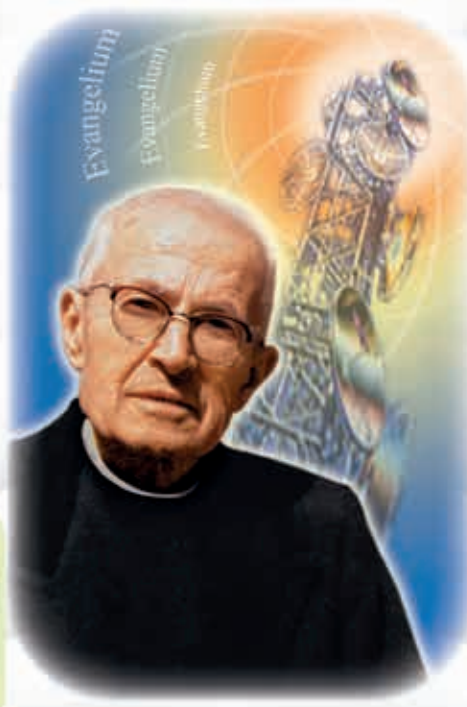


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THE SISTER WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

FR M A JOE ANTONY SJ

What made this nun and her amazing work known and appreciated all over the world is the Opus Prize she won in 2019. The award, worth one million dollars, is one of the world's most prestigious recognitions of faith-based initiatives that seek to address grave social problems.

Sr Catherine Mutindi, who won the Opus Prize for the year 2019, was born in Kenya, became a Good Shepherd Sister, and worked there till 2012. In 2012 a bishop in the Democratic Republic of Congo invited her to come to the city of Kolwezi and work for widows and orphans. Before beginning her work, she decided to talk to the local people and listen to them keenly in order to understand their plight. She realized very soon that the problems of not merely widows and orphans but children, adolescents and a vast majority of the poor people were related to cobalt mining in the city.

Cobalt is a rare metal that powers our mobile phones, tablets and laptops. It is also a key component of batteries used in electric cars. Well, you may not have seen many electric cars here in India, but experts predict that by 2030 one third of all motor vehicles in the world will be electric. Therefore the demand for cobalt keeps going up day by day. Nearly sixty per cent of the cobalt the world uses comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo (D R Congo), formerly Zaire, which is the second largest country in Africa. One third of it is extracted from unregulated, small-scale mines in Congo, where about 35,000 children work, risking their life and limb for less than two dollars (Rs 140) a day.

The child workers in these cobalt mines go down several metres underground through makeshift tunnels and dangerous shafts. Several children, working without any protective equipment, die in accidents, which are quite common. Some of them are just four or five years old. They go to work in these mines, wondering if they would see their families again in the evening.

Sr Catherine was dismayed to learn that these child workers see every day things a child should never see. Rape and violence were a tragic part of their miserable life. Boys who saw girl workers being raped, felt powerless to prevent them. They were just children, who needed the job for their families to survive.


After ten months, she started an NGO called 'Bon Pasteur' (Good Shepherd) that focused on providing safer alternatives to working in the mines. It offered education to children in makeshift schools. Sr Catherine noticed that only after they came to her school these children discovered they were actually children. In the mines they were just workers, despite their tender age. 'Bon Pasteur' taught women farming and sewing, and, through these trades, saving what they earn and investing it wisely.

Her work, that transformed the lives of these women and children, was soon recognized by the government as well as international organizations, such as the U.N., UNICEF, World Bank and World Vision.



While announcing that Sr Catherine Mutindi has been chosen for the Opus Prize, Don Neureuther, director of the Opus Prize Foundation, said, "Sr Catherine is working to address modern-day slavery, in children as young as 4 and 5, working in highly toxic cobalt mines, to earn enough to feed their families that day. In a relatively short period, she has transformed the lives of 3,000 children and countless adults, and literally restored their humanity."

Delighted by the news, a colleague, Sr Rosemary Karutani, who has known Sr Catherine for the last eighteen years, called her "an authentic shepherd, a faithful steward, a humble servant of the Lord and a true leader of our time."

"I am humbled," Sr Mutindi said, when asked about the award. "It is a mission that has global networks within and beyond the congregation; so it is a case story of what 'power together' for human dignity, the dignity of life, and for social justice can achieve. We are all connected and together we can make the world a much better place." 



Fr M A Joe Antony SJ, former Editor of *The New Leader* and *Jivan*, now resides at St Joseph's Collge, Trichy, teaching, writing and directing retreats and seminars. He can be reached at majoeantony@gmail.com



ANIMATION

FR JOSE KUTTIANIMATTATHIL SDB

“He is the life and soul of the community.” This is the observation I heard, just last week, about a priest in one of our formation communities. This is the meaning of animation – being the ‘life and soul of the community.’

In fact, the word ‘animation’ comes from the Latin word, ‘*anima*,’ which means soul, life. The superior has to be for the community what the soul is for any living being. What does the soul do for a living organism? The soul does mainly three things: i) it gives identity; ii) it gives unity; iii) it gives dynamism (life). As long as the soul is present, an organism manifests these three characteristics. Once the soul leaves, it loses these characteristics. Take the example of a human being. Till a particular moment we say he/she is alive, that is, he/she is a human being and has a name (identity); every part of the person is glued together and works together for the good of the whole (unity); and the person has vivacity, energy (dynamism). After a particular moment, we say he/she is dead. He/she becomes a corpse (loses identity); each part disintegrates (loses unity) and becomes inert (loses life). Like a soul, the superior has to give identity, unity and life to the community and its members.

The superior guarantees the identity of the community in two ways: i) The superior is the steward of the charism of the congregation and of the vision/ mission of the community. The superior ensures that only those things that promote the charism and mission are pursued by the members.

ii) It is said that, over a period of time, every organization takes on the characteristics of the one who leads it. The superior cultivates in himself/herself those characteristics that are in keeping with the charism and mission, so as to be able to bequeath that to the community.

One of the most important things that Jesus wished for his disciples was that they live united, “that they may all be one” (John 17:21). Every community is made up of individuals with different talents and temperaments. The superior values the talents of each one, assists him/her to enhance them and use them for the common good. Temperamental differences are acknowledged and guided in such a way that they do not hinder unity, but become pieces that enhance the beauty of the mosaic. Differences are allowed to exist in a healthy tension without degenerating into becoming tools of division. A programme of action for promoting unity in the community could be: “Think well of all, speak well of all, do good to all.”

Jesus says: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). In imitation of Jesus, the superior becomes a generator, bestower and enhancer of life. The superior does this by creating interest, motivation, enthusiasm, joy and dynamism. Efforts are constantly

made to present new reflections and suggestions. Opportune moments are used for reviews and corrections. All this does not require that one be in constant motion or agitation, or be stirring everything up. Rather, it requires that one sets in motion a positive set of attitudes and initiatives in order to arouse, sustain, and engage the energies of all the members. The goal is to increase the level of commitment, the sense of belonging and of co-responsibility that each one should have for the community; to evaluate critically the various aspects of any given problem and to make use even of errors and weaknesses in order to achieve improvements in the behaviour and actions of all. Referring to a provincial who was laying down office at the end of his term, one of the speakers said: “He loved the members of the province more than he loved himself.” What a wonderful example! To give life, one has to love the community and its members more than oneself.

The document *Fraternal Life in Community* considers a superior’s main task to be “the spiritual, community and apostolic animation of his or her community.” (n.50a). To be an effective animator, the superior has to pay attention to all the three areas, not just to one or the other.

The animator *par excellence* is the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who gives life to dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14), who renews everything (Ps 104:30). To animate a community is therefore to become a humble collaborator of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who makes us zealous, audacious, and efficient apostles, enriches each of us with particular gifts and all of us with the desire to work together to build God’s kingdom. ☐



Fr Jose Kuttianimattathil SDB is the coordinator of formation for the South Asia Region of the Salesians of Don Bosco. He is professor of systematic theology at Kristu Jyoti College, Bengaluru. His experience includes: Rector of the theologate and Provincial. He is the author of many books and articles. Email: jmksdb@gmail.com



IMPRISONED, ABANDONED & DESPERATE

SR LINI SHEEJA MSC

Prashanthi (*all names in this true story have been changed*) was just eighteen years old when she given in marriage to Lokesh, an alcoholic. His drunkenness and irresponsible attitude made life miserable for Prashanthi. Even the basic needs of their little son, Anand, were not met. Lokesh came home drunk every day, beating her for no reason, so much so that, when she would see him coming home, she trembled with fear and hid behind the door. One night, he started thrashing her as usual. The two-year-old child was in her arms. Lokesh dragged his wife into the kitchen and battered her fiercely. In self-defense, she pulled out a log of firewood and hit him on the head. He dashed against a wall and dropped dead. Terrified, she ran to the police station with the child in her arms, and admitted to the involuntary murder of her husband. She was arrested and sent to prison along with the two-year-old Anand.

At the age of six, Anand was shifted to Kolbe Home in Bengaluru, a rehabilitation centre for prisoners' children run by Prison Ministry India. With tears rolling down cheeks, Prashanthi told me, "If Anand had grown up with us, he would not have become the smart and intelligent boy that he is now. His talents in singing, dancing and in sports have also bloomed only because he has been under your care."

Prashanti, now released from prison, and her son are two of the forty beneficiaries of the "Housing project" launched by Prison Ministry India (PMI) as part of the Ruby Jubilee celebrations (1981-2021). PMI is a national voluntary organization under the Justice, Peace and Development Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), working for the integral human development of prisoners. Bishop Allwyn D'Silva is its Chairman,

and Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS the National Coordinator.

Rehabilitation Centres

"Won't you give me a second chance to renew my life? I want to lead a good life, but when I'm released, people will look at me only as a prisoner. People don't accept the truth and keep suspecting me. Probably the police will catch me again under the pretext of suspicion. Could you arrange a place where I could stay for some months? My family has abandoned me. Society considers me a criminal. If you don't help me, who else in the world would dare? When I'm released, no one is willing to provide me a job. An ex-prisoner who was placed as a helper in a printing press saw me in the same printing press where I had gone for book designing. Through the window he called me out and asked me not to tell anyone that he

had been in the prison as I knew him from the prison.” This is the plight of ex-prisoners who carry the stigma as prisoners throughout their life. To accommodate them, to renew them, to prevent them from not returning to prisons, PMI has established twenty rehabilitation centres for former prisoners and their children.

Worse than Prison Walls

The external walls are not as painful in their lives as the walls which the family members and society erect before them. The moment they are arrested, they feel abandoned and separated; life becomes meaningless. Most of them feel inclined to commit suicide within the four walls of prisons rather than live meaningless lives behind the bars. Listening to their agony on the first day of their entry in prison, you will be moved to tears. You hear such touching stories of being mocked, laughed at by others and abandoned by loved ones.

The agony does not end here. It becomes even more poignant when their family members do not visit them. We come across many prisoners who have not been visited by their family members for years. An inmate who was going to be released after serving his jail term burst into tears as he told me, “I was arrested for my son’s mistake. When I was thrown behind the bars, it didn’t pain me much. The agony began when my wife harassed me with her words. She then abandoned me and married someone else. I had no one visiting me these years except my mother and the PMI volunteers.”

A Ministry of Compassion

Prison Ministry India volunteers walking in the footsteps of our Master, who chose to become one of us and was closed to those most abandoned. We involve ourselves in the redemptive mission of Jesus for the lost, least and the last. PMI volunteers believe, “Every saint has a past and every sinner a future.” Every one of our brothers and sisters who are behind the bars has a future. PMI

has redeemed thousands of prisoners and the book, *Redeemed Prisoner*, published by Prison Ministry India, presents the life stories of prisoners who are redeemed.

Prison Ministry is a joyful service for prisoners. This joy is expressed in full by our begging lifestyle. We do not receive any foreign funding. To help those in jail, we beg. How? Our volunteers stand with a bucket at church doors, with a smile on their face. All our PMI volunteers become warriors as they beg to release our brothers and sisters in jail, to feed their children in our rehabilitation centres and to provide life for the released men and women. We gaze at the Crucified Master as we partake in the sufferings of our brethren and beg for them.

Two Different Worlds

Outside the prison is the world of those who can go wherever they want, the world of those who are able to choose the people they want to meet. Outside is also the world of interpersonal relationships, the world of families, jobs and leisure. The scene is entirely different inside prisons. Freedom to move is severely restricted. Inside is the world of limited contacts, strictly regulated visiting hours and forced togetherness of people who would otherwise never have dreamt of sharing their living space. Owing to hardship, loneliness and despair, most of the prisoners not only feel deserted by human beings, but also feel abandoned by God. They ask, ‘If God loves me, why should I suffer like this?’ It is at this juncture that our PMI volunteers enter their dark cells, carrying the ray of light and hope to their lives. God’s unconditional love and mercy are carried by our volunteers, who expect nothing in

return except to bring a bit of God’s love and care to those who are within.

PMI volunteers need an abundance of patience and a non-judgemental attitude to believe that even the most broken lives and situations can be restored and made whole with God’s grace and human cooperation. Prison ministry does not end with visits to the prison; it goes beyond prison walls to the families of prisoners too – counselling, emotional support, accompanying them to the court when necessary, etc. Thanks to the generosity of benefactors who constantly support us, we are able to get some of them released from prison and support their families financially for maintenance and education of their children.

As a spiritual support to our sisters and brothers in jail, Prison Ministry India launched *Incessant Intercessory Invocation for the Incarcerated* online at the newly constructed Reformatory Research Documentation Centre (RRDC) chapel, Bengaluru. PMI volunteers from throughout the country and from various parts of the world pray online for half an hour. This goes on for 24 hours and 365 days—a chain of prayers for the prisoners, their families and their victims all over the world. The form of prayer can vary—Holy Eucharist, Way of the Cross, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary, etc. We started this new venture during the Covid-19 lockdown, since we are restricted in our prison visits.

Prison ministry work is challenging, but also satisfying. A gun cannot change the prisoner, but a nun can! Can you join hands with us in this noble ministry for the lost ones of our society? If you and I don’t reach out to them, who will? It is our brothers and sisters who are in prison. ☐



Sr Lini Sheeja MSC belongs to the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. She served as the national secretary of Prison Ministry India and Chief Editor for Prison Voice, a national monthly magazine.



LAWS ON MENTAL HEALTH CARE

FR RAVI SAGAR SJ

A year ago (March 2020), *India Today* magazine reported a 20% increase in patients with mental illness after the coronavirus outbreak in the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized that determinants of mental health and mental disorders include not only individual attributes, such as, the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours and interactions with others, but also social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental factors, such as, national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions, and community social supports.

Mental Health Issues in India

A holistic approach and comprehensive strategies are required for intervention, promotion, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues in India. National Mental Health Policies must be in place which not only promote treatment of mental health disorders but provide overarching directions on broader issues for ensuring mental health promotion. The WHO estimates that the burden of mental health problems in India is to the tune of 2,443 DALYs ("Disability-Adjusted

Life Years") per 1,00,000 population, and the age-adjusted suicide rate per 1,00,000 population is 21.1. It is also estimated that the economic loss due to mental health conditions between 2012-2030, is 1.03 trillion US dollars. The number of mental health workers in India show the inadequacy: For every 100,000 persons, we have only 0.3 psychiatrists, 0.12 nurses, 0.07 psychologists and 0.07 social workers.

Mental Healthcare Act

In October 2007, India signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2017, the Parliament passed the Mental Healthcare Act.

This Act upholds the rights of mentally ill persons. It provides for mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of such persons during delivery of mental healthcare and services. The law recognizes the fact that persons with mental illness constitute a vulnerable section of society who are subject to discrimination in society. Moreover, families bear the financial hardship, as well as the emotional and social burden of providing treatment and care for their relatives with

mental illness. Therefore, persons with mental illness should be treated like any other persons with health problems. The environment around them should be made conducive to facilitate recovery, rehabilitation and full participation in society.

The Vision

The law mandates to ensure healthcare, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons with mental illness, and to provide it in the least restrictive environment possible and in a manner that does not intrude on their rights and dignity. Community-based solutions, in the vicinity of person's usual place of residence, are preferred to institutional solutions. The purpose of providing treatment, care and rehabilitation is to improve the capacity of the persons to develop one's full potential and to facilitate one's integration into community.

The public and private mental health sectors are regulated within their rights framework to achieve the greatest public health good. This will improve accessibility to mental healthcare by mandating sufficient provision of quality public mental health services and nondiscrimination health insurance. Establishing a

mental health system integrated into all levels of general healthcare to promote principles of equity, efficiency and active participation of all stakeholders in decision-making was the vision of the legislation.

What is Mental Illness?

According to section 2(s) of the Act, mental illness means a substantial disorder of thinking, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs judgement, behaviour, capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life, as well as mental conditions associated with the abuse of alcohol and drugs. It does not include mental retardation, which is a condition of arrested or incomplete development of a person's mind, specially characterized by sub-normality of intelligence.

Determination of Mental Illness:

Section 3 of the Act gives the determination of mental illness. It shall be in accordance with nationally or internationally accepted medical standards (including the latest edition of the international classification of disease by the WHO) as notified by the Central Government. No person or authority shall classify someone as a person with mental illness, except for purposes directly relating to the treatment of the mental illness or in other matters as covered under this

legislation or any other law for the time being in force.

The mental illness of a person shall not be determined based on (a) political, economic or social status or membership of a cultural, racial or religious group, or for any other reason not directly relevant to mental health status of the person; (b) non-conformity with moral, social, cultural, work or political values or religious beliefs prevailing in a person's community. Past treatment or hospitalization in a mental health establishment, though relevant, shall not by itself justify any present or future determination of the person's mental illness. The determination of a person's mental illness shall alone not imply or be taken to mean that the person is of unsound mind, unless he has been declared as such by a competent court.


Mental Healthcare

Mental Healthcare includes analysis and diagnosis of a person's mental condition and treatment as well as care and rehabilitation of such a person for his/her mental illness or suspected mental illness. The person with mental illness is deemed to have

ability to understand the relevant information on the treatment, and capacity to make mental health care and treatment decisions.

Section 4 of the Act provides that every person, including a person with mental illness, shall be deemed to have capacity to make decisions regarding his mental healthcare or treatment if such person has ability to: (a) understand the information that is relevant to take a decision on the treatment or admission or personal assistance; or (b) appreciate any reasonably foreseeable consequence of a decision or lack of decision on the treatment or admission or personal assistance; or (c) communicate the decision by means of speech, expression, gesture or any other means.

The information shall be given to a person using simple language, which such person understands or in sign language or visual aids or any other means to enable him to understand the information.

All these provisions of the Act are meant to protect persons with mental illness, and help them get adequate treatment given in a dignified manner. 



Fr Ravi Sagar SJ, a law graduate, holds PG diplomas in labour laws and human rights. Founder-Director of Legal Cell for Human Rights, Guwahati, he practiced law in Guwahati High Court for 18 years. Based in Indian Social Institute, Delhi, he continues law practice in Delhi. E-mail: ravisagarsj@gmail.com

FORM IV

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper (MAGNET) to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February.

1. Place of publication: New Delhi
 2. Periodicity of its publication: Monthly
 3. Printer's Name: Innovative Designers and Printers
Nationality: Indian
Address: F-32/6, Okhla Industrial Area II, 1st Floor, New Delhi 110020
 4. Publisher's Name: Jose Mannath
Nationality: Indian
Address: CRI House, Masihgarh, New Friends Colony, New Delhi 110025
 5. Editor's Name: Jose Mannath
Nationality: Indian
Address: CRI House, Masihgarh, New Friends Colony, New Delhi 110025
 6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital: Conference of Religious of India, CRI House, Masihgarh, New Friends Colony, New Delhi 110025
- I, Jose Mannath, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: February 28, 2021

Signature of Publisher

FUN AND MORE

QUIZ

1. Quiz



I am a word of 5 letters!
Everybody eats me!

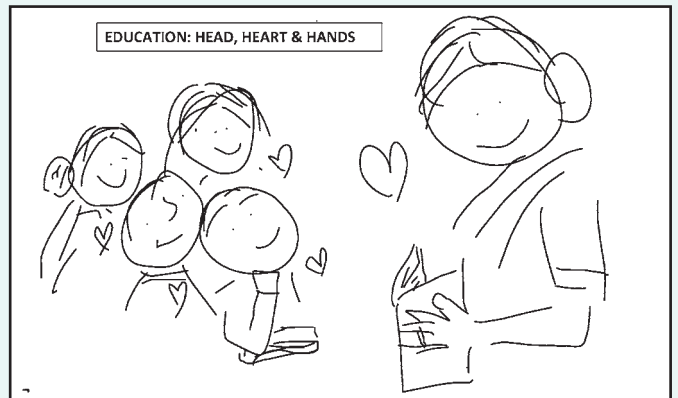
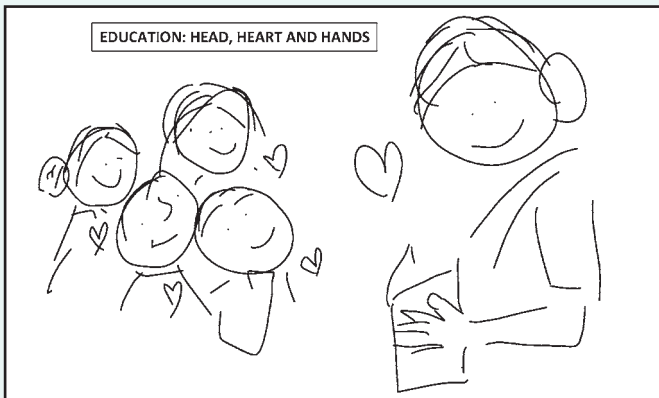
If you remove my first letter, I will be a form of energy!!!
If you remove my first 2 letters, I will be needed for living!!!
If you remove my first 3 letters, I will be a preposition and near you!!!
If you remove my first 4 letters, I will be a drink for you!!!



2. Find the Nine Hidden Objects



3. Spot the ten differences between the two pictures





The UN first celebrated ZDD on March 1, 2014, after UNAIDS—a UN programme on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)—launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on World AIDS Day in December 2013. Almost 40 million people worldwide suffer from HIV/AIDS.

Discrimination refers to the selective practice of unfairly treating a person or a group of people differently from others due to such factors as nationality, race, colour, religion, gender, age, profession, education or disability. Despite laws and education, discrimination continues to be a wide-spread problem throughout the world. Many countries have and still use discrimination as a way of governing.

ZDD aims at promoting equality before the law and in practice through inclusion, compassion and peace, thus creating a global movement for change and solidarity to end all forms of discrimination, and to work towards positive transformation.

In February 2017, UNAIDS called on people to speak up and prevent discrimination from standing in the way of achieving ambitions, goals and dreams.

Campaigners in India have used this day to speak out against laws discriminating against the LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex) community, especially during the previous campaign to repeal the law (Indian Penal Code, s377) that used to criminalise homosexuality in the country. That law was overturned by the Indian Supreme Court in September 2018.

In 2020, UNAIDS challenged the discrimination faced by women, in order to raise awareness and mobilize action to promote equality and empowerment.

Although some countries have made laudable progress towards greater gender equality, discrimination against women still exists everywhere. In many countries, laws that discriminate against women remain in force, while laws that uphold women's basic rights and protect them against harm and unequal treatment are far from the norm.

Our world is still deeply tainted by discrimination. Racial discrimination has led to unjust killings and riots in several countries in the recent past. Some other countries reel under discrimination based on differences of caste and creed. We all need to feel brothers and sisters in one universal human family.

Discriminating against some people or groups as inferior or as outsiders—whether based on race, religion, caste, tribe, language, political party or gender orientation or whatever—is wrong and unjust. The majority does not have the right to violate the rights of smaller and weaker groups.




"Earth Hour," organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), started in 2007 in Sydney, Australia. It encourages individuals, businesses and governments in more than 180 countries and territories to be accountable for their ecological footprint, and provide real solutions to environmental challenges. Every year, on the last Saturday of March, from 8:30 to 9:30 pm, millions across the world choose to turn off their lights to celebrate their commitment to preserve the planet and its natural heritage.

We waste a lot of fuel and electricity. We produce a lot of waste. The consumption of fossil fuels at a rapid pace in the last few decades has greatly harmed our environment. Nature loss, biodiversity and climate change are the biggest challenges of our time, and they are interconnected.

Our world has been transformed by an explosion in global trade, consumption, population growth and the move towards urbanisation. Climate change is causing rising seas, stronger storms and shifting habitats for wildlife and people. More and more species are being endangered. By switching off our lights just for one hour, we can make a substantial difference in energy consumption.

During EH in 2013, Toronto recorded a 205-megawatt reduction, equivalent to 92,000 homes off the grid. Bangkok recorded a 1,699-megawatt reduction, eliminating roughly 1,073 tons of carbon-dioxide emissions.

In 2015, 82 million EH videos were watched between January and March, with 7.8 million digital EH interactions taking place just between March 27 and 29. These figures will keep on growing as the years go by and more EHs are celebrated.

Regardless of whether alone or with others, sitting in the dark at EH is a reminder that we need to come together to solve climate change. There are 8760 hours in a year. Switching off the lights for just one hour in 365 days might not seem to make a lot of difference. Some suggest that EH should be at least one hour every month. It might still be insufficient, but saving power for twelve hours in a year is much better than doing it for one hour. 

SRESME DA CUNHA FDCC

Special Days



Sr Esme da Cunha FDCC is a Canossian Sister. Her experience includes: College lecturer in physics, co-ordinator of preparation for final vows, member of the provincial and general councils.



WAITING

Director: Anu Menon * **Cast:** Naseeruddin Shah, Kalki Koechlin, Rajat Kapoor, Suhasini Manirathnam, Arjun Mathur. 2016. 98 minutes.

The story takes place in and around an ICU unit of a luxury hospital in Kochi. Tara Deshpande-Kapoor had married Rajat against the wishes of her family. But, even as their marriage is going strong, she is rudely snapped out of her busy normalcy when Rajat lands in the hospital emergency ICU unconscious following a car crash. His life and their future are uncertain. Unable to seek help from her or Rajat's family, and never informing them either, Tara desperately wants to find out what to do next. The doctors have nothing consoling to say. In her confusion and shock, Tara crosses paths with retired Professor Shiv Natraj, married to Pankaja, his Malayalee wife for forty years, now in the ICU for eight months. They are childless. Natraj has now become settled to the routine of staying alone in his house and being at her bedside daily, talking and reading to the unresponsive wife. Tara asks Natraj what is to be done. He replies, "We have to wait." The impetuous and often foul-mouthed Tara learns some precious lessons from the elderly and financially stressed professor, whose dedication to his wife and his hope of her recovery despite the doctor's opinions are heroic. Tara takes inspiration from Natraj, who does not know social media ("What is Twitter?"), signifying the generation gap. A declared atheist, she even joins Natraj to pray at a temple and makes a reconciliatory gesture with her in-laws by calling Rajat's mother. Besides presenting the grim realities of life and death in hospitals, the movie is heartwarming in many ways about trauma both physical and mental, decision-making in life-and-death situations and, above all, hope and true love between spouses and across generations. There is humour too about the confusion faced by urban North Indians dealing with semi-urbanized Malayalees and, of course, the language difference!



NOBODY KNOWS I'M HERE

Director: Gaspar Antillo * **Cast:** Jorge Garcia, Millaray Lobos, Juan Falcón Julio Fuentes Nelson Brodt. 2020. 100 minutes.

Memo Garrido, a young man brought up in USA, is now in hiding in a faraway island in Chile. He hides a dark secret. He had been a talented child singer, and was sold by his greedy father to a music company that would use his voice but would not allow him to appear onstage because of his being fat and ugly. They substitute him onstage with Angelo, a good-looking child, to capture the audience and make money. Memo was forced into being a ghost singer on account of his appearance. He felt deeply humiliated and hated Angelo. His song, *Nobody Knows I'm Here* made Angelo famous. He attacks Angelo and cripples him, and then runs away to live with his uncle as a social recluse. He also develops bizarre behaviours. A young woman called Marta tried to connect with him. She accidentally discovers his singing talent, and learns of his past. She visits him and brings him food. She makes his story known to a TV journalist. Memo hates publicity and does not want to go back to the normal world. When his father comes to visit him, Memo confronts him about his betrayal and greed. Marta convinces Memo to appear at a TV reality show and be reconciled with Angelo, who has become famous through his autobiography. Angelo is ready to be reconciled, but would not admit the deception he had been involved in. Memo wants him to tell the truth. When this does not happen, he leaves—but not before singing the song that had made Angelo famous. The only one who stands by him through all this is Marta, who truly cares about him, and wants a future with him. ^M



Dr Gigy Joseph is HOD of Communicative English at CMS College, Kottayam, Kerala, and guest faculty at St Thomas Major Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kerala.

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April 26 – May 1, 2021	- Leadership and Community Building Skills
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May 3 – 8, 2021	- Mass Media and Religious Life
May 10 – 15, 2021	- Psycho-Spiritual-Sexual Integration
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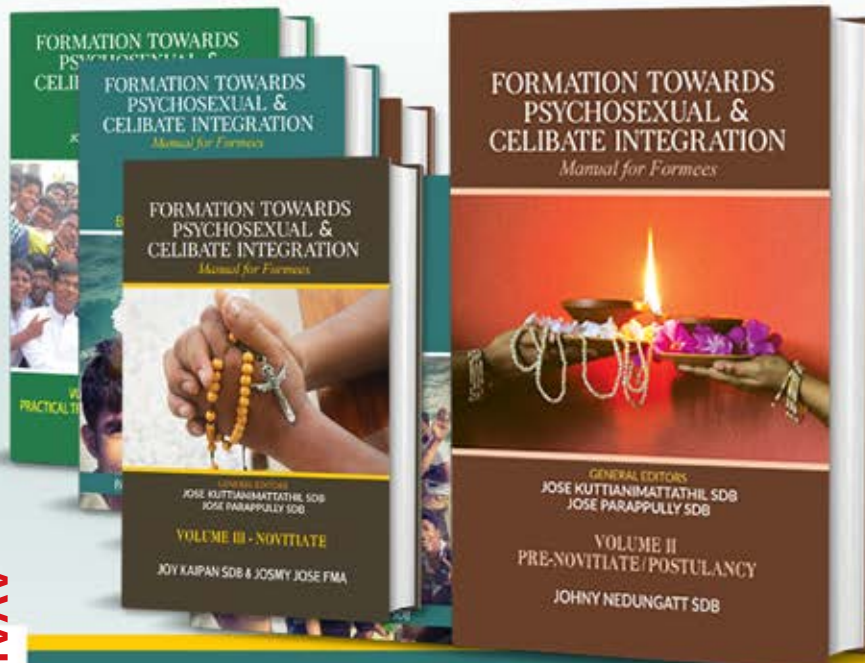
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