

SHRINE OF THE INFANT JESUS

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IJ matters



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A word before.....

The month of October 2021 was a very eventful month. We began with the celebration of the feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, continued with the feast of the Guardian Angels, Our Lady of the Rosary and the feasts of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Luke one of the four evangelists and of Saints Simon and Jude Apostles.

It was also the month in which the Government of Maharashtra allowed the opening of religious places for the public to worship. The date chosen was October 7, 2021 which was the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and also the first day of Navratri which is a festival for nine nights.

Our October issue takes note of many of these events.

We begin with a piece by Dr. (Fr.) Conrad Pessa of St. Therese and on the mark she has left in the world even 124 years after her death. Since we celebrated the feast of the Guardian Angels, I have reflected on the significance of the Archangels for our world today.

Fr. Terry asks the world to give peace a chance. In Incounters "The Beach", he is invited to "Enter the sea," and "swim towards the horizon if you wish to make your memory pure." In "Raindrop" he is able to see God's tender loving care.

Fr. Bosco reflects on the significance of our Blessed Mother in connection with the feast of the Rosary.

Teacher Sweta Dias narrates how a "cannonball released 500 years ago causes the JESUIT tornado today...."

In his Marathi article "दृष्टी देते व्यक्तिमत्वाला आकार" Fr. Dionysius explains how one's perspective gives shape to one's personality and Fr. Vincy D'mello in एका ठेचेचे महापरिवर्तन!! writes about Transformation. In "जिवंत संत" Fr. Augustine writes about "Living Saints"

We do hope that you will enjoy this issue of IJ Matters.

We thank you for your support and generous contributions to the Shrine and our work with the poor.

May God be with you and your families, may the Infant Jesus bless you all and may Mary keep interceding.

STRATEGIC THERESE



Fr. Conrad Pessa SJ
St. Xavier's College Mumbai.

The strategic choices made by Little Flower Therese a hundred years ago are still relevant in the challenging Covid era that we live in. But just who was Therese? I choose to leave out the biographical details as these are covered in good measure by Google. Hence this article will focus on her path breaking insights and the revolutionary shift she made. It will most certainly help in giving us hope and bolster our courage to face incriminating situations that are an ever present reality across the sands of time and the different geographies that we step into. We have seen that companies which adopt the right strategies at different points in their life cycle produce good results. These have a huge following on the stock markets. Therese had used different strategies at different points of her life time. Small wonder she is considered as one of the most important saints in the modern era.

She could be described in contemporary jargon as someone who was deeply aware of herself. Her entry into Carmel gave her pretty early, a confirmation of the realistic expectations she had. She stayed in touch with her powerlessness and soon realized that sanctity was a mountain to be surmounted but she was just a grain of sand. Sanctity as per her mindset was not an act or performance but a gift of grace from the Divine. This is similar to the profound experience that St Ignatius of Loyola had, which he captured in his Spiritual Exercises. Her aria slowly stopped being “I want and I am going to do it for you”. It became a more acceptable as well as for all of us too “It is impossible, therefore You will do it for me”. This is akin to the active passivity of Our Lady at the time of the Annunciation. She went on to say “What unutterable joy to bear our crosses feebly”.

She like, many of us too, experienced that one cannot love without suffering. This very weakness was her strength. She also made a radical statement later “all suffering is sweet.” Carlo Carretto another modern day mystic puts it slightly differently when he stated in his book *Love is for Living*, that we need to “love more to suffer less”. I too tell couples or any other set of human beings that the day we can tell the other something like “I love your anger” then we will have made it.

This is a reality for many of us, especially parents today. They do so much for their children and often get brickbats and painful ingratitude. In a generation that is perceived as increasingly selfish, many of us are trammled in an attempt to stay loving. Hence like Therese we are called to love more and more without expectation. To be on the same page with Therese on this aspect, we need to revisit the experience of Divine Mercy in our lives. Mercy is a groundswell which we cannot invent or produce ourselves, it is the flow of God's deepest feeling into our being. As much as we strive to conquer space and the many unknowns of our universe, the more we realize our finiteness and brokenness. Hence the desire for gentleness and tenderness. The pandemic that we are living through has only heightened this reality more than ever. Therese had gone through a marathon preparation to realize that God much appreciated her lowliness rather than her flourishing virtues. Sometimes our encounter with the harsh realities tends to edge out our sanctity as we confront our personal vulnerability and Therese has this to say “I must bear with myself such as I am with all my imperfections”

Confidence, in her original text was written as 'Confiance' in French. It has a dynamic connotation and is evident from her first entry into Carmel. In Therese, it is seen in her surge of trust, her fears ebbing in her audacious behavior before Pope Leo, where she broke all decorum. She crashed through the security cordon, caught him by the knees and looked him in the eye and dared to make her plea to enter Carmel at the tender age of 15. She could remember this incident so vividly and with great detail, even 8 years later she could recall the Gospel text of the day Lk :12:32. Therese was a toughie who would brook no negative for an answer, much like the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28) and the widow (Lk 18:1-8). She was no spring chicken and cultivated their “effrontery and dogged tenacity”, this is in sharp contrast to her sugary image that is oft portrayed. Her outrageous acts like her outspokenness in the presence of Pope Leo XIII were seen as appalling by those who were satisfied with the status quo.

Her relationship with Jesus was very personal and she referred to Him as Tu in French (similar to the tu in Marathi). Whilst in Carmel she had a liberating retreat under Fr Alexis (Franciscan) she wrote “it launched me full sail upon the waves of confidence”. Another outlandish statement was “I will give the good God no rest till He has given me all that I want”. If for Ignatius of Loyola at least “the desire to desire “was important, then for Therese the aspiration itself is a sign from the Divine. She writes to Pauline her sister “God made me always desire what He wanted to give me”.

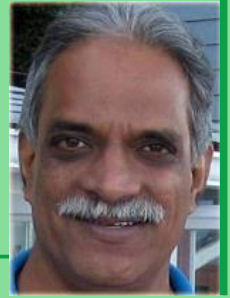
Can we have such confidence? Do our situations warrant such trust? Is this only for the religious elite? A little introspection on our pathway in Christian discipleship reveals the some of the sources of our discouragement are sin and weakness. Therese shows us how the Joyous Assurance against our weakness and Humble Boldness when broken by sin are paradoxically the building blocks and stepping stones to discover that Grace that will lead us to the Light. This is very much like what is done in management, our weaknesses become our opportunities.

We need not be intimidated by our limitations. Therese herself felt like us, the stark distance between our aspirations and our weaknesses. Indeed, God is not disappointed by our defects. We need to be

confident that the Lord loves us in and through it all. Being a realist she well knew that none of us are without faults. She is one with those of us who go through the uneasy pangs of impatience when things do not go the way we want. Like St Paul she went on to say “I am not disturbed at seeing myself as weakness itself. On the contrary, it is in my weakness that I Glory.” Jansenism with its focus on merit were the order of her day. It was here again that she made a very strategic detour. She seemed to have a disdain for the bankrupt process of amassing merits. She was certain her weakness like for most of humanity was the most apt material for the amazing action of Grace. She has by her life conveyed the message of loving our powerlessness and democratized confidence in our joyous surrender to the Divine.



The Archangels and their relevance for us today



Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ
Chaplain, The Shrine of Infant Jesus

The English word 'Angel' comes from the Hebrew *mal'akh* or Greek *Angelos* and means “messenger”. The angel is one who delivers a message from God.

The theology of angels reveals many things about God.

1. It says first that God does not leave the world to its own design. In God's care and concern for the world, God does not interfere but is constantly offering suggestions and counsels.
2. Second it says that as humans, we will need succour or help at times and when we do, we can always call on God's angels.
3. Third it says that God is always available whenever we call on God.

Traditionally the three Archangels are Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Of these Michael and Gabriel are mentioned in the Old and New Testaments whereas Raphael is mentioned only in the Old Testament. However, in later Christian tradition, Raphael is mentioned as the angel who stirred the water in the pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:3-4). The names of the three angels reveal their function. They

elaborate what these messengers will do on behalf of God.

A. Michael: The name means “Who is like God?” This is a rhetorical question, which is a question asked to create a dramatic effect. The answer to the question is contained in the question, namely, there is no one like God. This does not mean only that God is unique (each of us is unique and special) but that God is above us in every single way. We have become more aware of this during the current pandemic. It has brought home to us the fact that we are humans and will be limited and that God is God and is almighty and all powerful. Despite our many advancements in science and technology and despite our numerous boasts, we have been laid low by a dead virus. Who really are we and who is God? The Archangel Michael is mentioned in the Old Testament in the Book of Daniel. Here, Michael is a helper to Daniel (Dan 10:13-21) and shows through his actions the mercy and grace of God. Michael tells Daniel that he has come to help Daniel. He reveals that God rules history and looks after the welfare of his people.

The reason why it seems that God has delayed is because of the resistance that people showed. However, despite resistance, God will keep coming to the aid of people. They have only to open their hearts and minds to receive God's help. They can do this by knowing their place in the world and acknowledging God's place in their lives.

In the New Testament, Michael is mentioned by the letter of Jude (Jude 1:9) where he is shown as being merciful even to Satan. In the book of Revelation (Rev 12:7-9) which is significant in our present context, Michael has been identified as the one who with his angels fought the dragon and defeated it. The dragon has been identified variously as sin and evil that threaten our world, political leaders who are concerned about their own good rather than the good of the people of their country, and even individuals who are focussed so much on earning more wealth that they will stomp on the poor and their rights, and think nothing of it. It is with these that the Archangel contends and wins.

A. Gabriel: The name means “God is my strength”. In the Old Testament, Gabriel is mentioned in the revelation that is made to Daniel (Dan 8:15-17). The point made is that God comes to the help of Daniel who is a mere mortal as is shown in the manner in which he is addressed “son of man”. It was in a distinctly godless situation that Gabriel is sent to reiterate that God is strong. Later in the same book, Gabriel comes to Daniel when he praying, acknowledging that he is a sinner and offering

supplication to the Lord (Dan 9:20).

In the New Testament, Gabriel is sent to both Zechariah and Mary to announce the births of John the Baptist and Jesus respectively. Both these announcements changed the course of history for the whole world. In a sense therefore, Gabriel was the bringer of the news of salvation for all peoples everywhere.

In the present situation in which we find ourselves we need to keep listening attentively to what God is saying to us through his angels. It was because Mary developed the art of listening attentively that she could hear the angel's message and respond so wholeheartedly to it. Her response resulted in a hopeless situation being salvaged. If we in imitation of her open our hearts to listen attentively and respond as she did, God will keep sending angels to guide and show us the way.

B. Raphael: The name means “God heals”. He is mentioned in the Book of Tobit. It is through his instructions that Tobit's blindness is cured. It is also when the instructions of Raphael are followed that demon Asmodeus who caused Sarah much distress is driven out. Raphael departs from the presence of Tobit and Tobias with instructions to declare God's deeds of power.

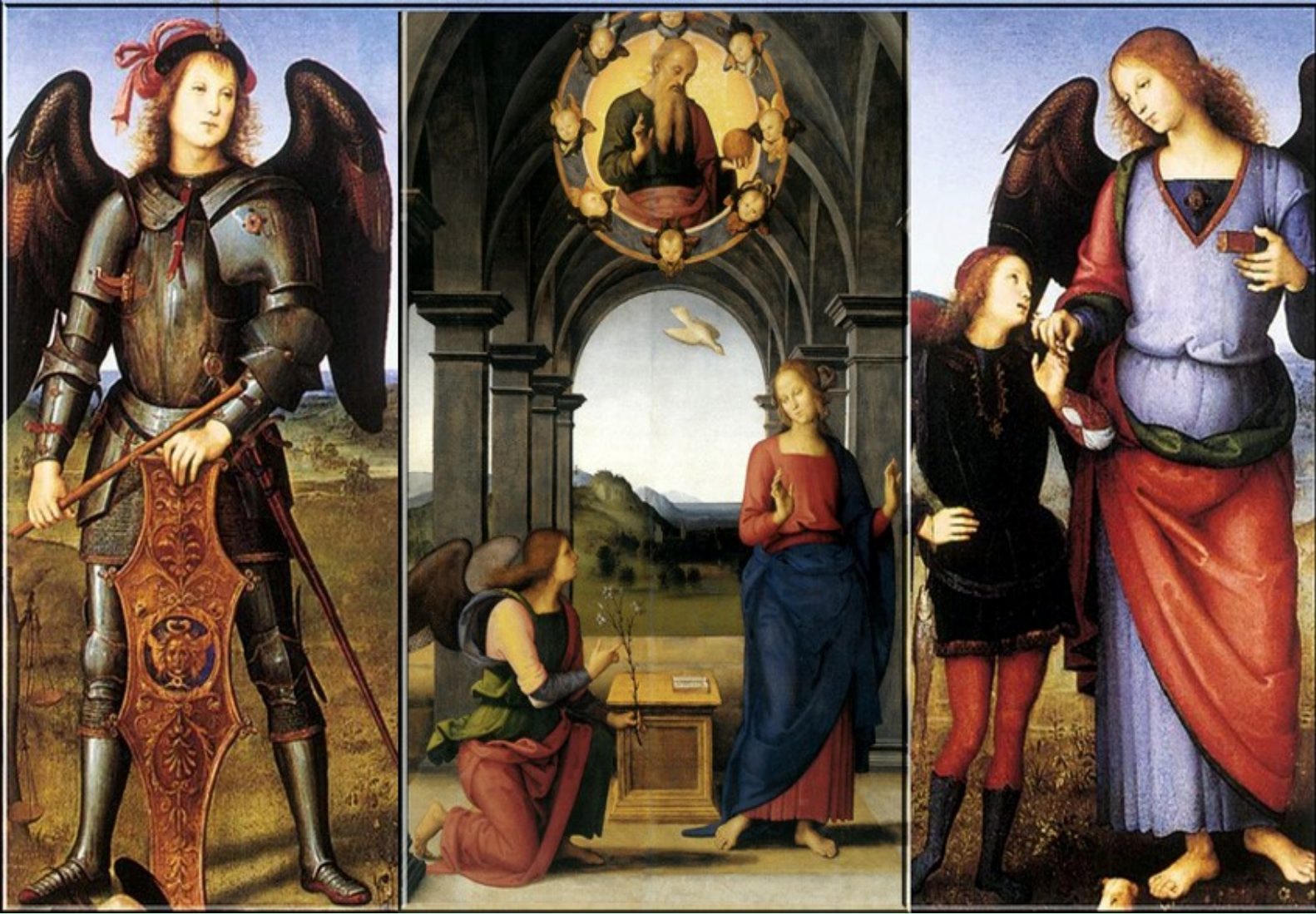
Because of the meaning of his name, Raphael later became associated with the angel mentioned in Jn 5:4 *“for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well from whatever disease that person had”*.

The help rendered to Tobias and the service provided to those who stepped in the pool have resulted in Raphael being the patron of the blind, travellers, nurses, physicians and medical workers.

The intervention of Raphael in our Covid-19 stricken world is much needed. We need the healing touch of God in our lives.

All three archangels are manifestations of the different ways in

which God comes to our aid. There is no one who is like God. If we keep remembering that we are humans and God is God, we will have done well. God's strength is available if we will but open our minds and hearts to see like Mary did. God will heal our broken world even as we listen to God's instructions like Tobit, Tobias and Sarah did.

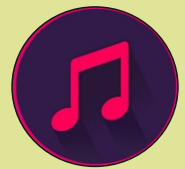


GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Give peace a chance the people said
The soldiers raised their long black guns
And shot the white bird dead
The green grass earth is turning crimson red again
Mushroom clouds keep pouring down their rain

Give peace a chance the people cried
Across the nation politicians televised their lies
There's terror written in the children's eyes again
Mushroom clouds keep pouring down their rain

We've got to build a better world together
We've got to help the children live
It will be much too late to wait till tomorrow
Starting right now we must give



[Click here for Audio](#)

Give peace a chance the people prayed
The skies are overcast with toxic fumes
that have been sprayed
The bodies of the dead have been displayed again
Mushroom clouds keep pouring down their rain

Give peace a chance we must believe
The peace we give to others is the peace we will receive
A broken earth is crying for reprieve again
Mushroom clouds keep pouring down their rain

We've got to build a better world together
We've got to help the children live
It will be much too late to wait till tomorrow
Starting right now we must give
Give peace a chance... give peace a chance...
Give peace a chance...

Lyrics and music : TerryQ



INCOUNTERS – 2:

The Beach

Fr. Terry Quadros SJ



This time he met me pacing the beach in the late afternoon.

Suddenly, and almost imperceptibly, he was there walking by my side. I did not have to say anything. And he himself was pensive and silent. We just walked quietly together over the uneven sands.

I moved to familiar spots on the beach stopping now and then.

I touched the sands in different places, speaking to them about things that had happened there.

It all seemed so long ago.

I remembered.....games we had played, sandcastles we had built, picnic lunches we had shared, songs we had sung. We had playfully splashed one another with seawater in the shallows. We had

pensively sat down on the sands side by side in silence, enjoying the sea breezes. Memories.....

"You must love the beach very much," the holy man said finally.

There was no need to answer him. He knew how I felt.

"Sit down," he said.

I did. He sat down on the sands by my side. We did not say anything for a while. We just watched the soft-foam waves come and go. The sea breezes caressed us gently as we sat there in silence.

"Do you wish to talk about it?" he asked.

I did not answer him. There was too much to say.

"The sands are always shifting," he said.
"The beach never remains the same."

I turned to look at the footprints we had just made. They seemed fainter already. He caught the direction of my gaze and nodded.

"Tomorrow the beach will not remember us. There will be other footprints. And still others the day after. Beaches do not have memories."

I picked up some of the sand and let it run through my fingers. It fell back to the beach forming a new pattern. The holy man was right. The beach never remained the same.

He reached out, picked up a shell that was lying nearby and handed it to me. The shell was dry and empty. It could have been empty for ten years. Or a hundred. No one would know. It was now part of the beach. The shell too had no memories.

"How long do you wish to remain on the beach?" he asked.

"If I leave I may not remember," I told him.

"The sands on the beach are always shifting," he reminded me. "The memories are with you."

I nodded in agreement, but I was hesitant to let go...

There were a few minutes left for sunset. He directed my gaze towards the open sea. The tide was coming in. Each wave

brought the waters nearer to us as we sat there in silence on the sands. Quite suddenly, a larger wave broke and its foamed edge reached up to our feet.

"You must forget the beach if you wish to remember," he told me.

"How can I forget the beach?" I asked.

"Enter the sea," he replied. "You must swim towards the horizon if you wish to make your memory pure."

His eyes were kind with understanding. Somehow deep down inside of me I sensed he was speaking the truth. This was the only way I could be free of the memories that bound me to the sands.

I stood up, turned away from him and moved towards the inviting waters. I did not need to turn around and see them, but I could sense my newly formed footprints slowly disappearing from the wet sands behind me.

I entered the waters and moved on ...

The sun had just begun to set as I stroked my way towards the horizon.

As I swam, I looked back at the beach. The holy man was standing there motionless. His whole body was bathed in the orange glow of the setting sun. I swam on.

The next time I turned to look, the holy man had disappeared.

On the beach, many miles away already, the sands kept on shifting.

RAINDROP



Fr. Terry Quadros SJ

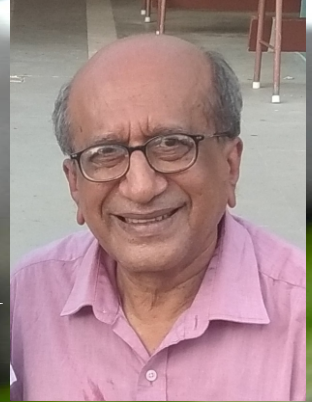


Photo: terryq

In little things we often see
God's love, His magic mystery.
A moment there next moment gone
Blessed by his grace life carries on

He's always there in big and small
His caring hands around us all
The time we rush around through life
Through celebrations storm and strife

The raindrop finds its place and stays
A while in grace reflecting ways
Of gentle presence always there
A father's love a father's care.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

INTERCEDE FOR US!

Fr. Bosco D'souza SJ

Asst. Chaplain The Shrine of Infant Jesus



It was in the last quarter of the year 2019 that a tiny VIRUS was discovered in Wuhan, China, and which spread rapidly to other parts of the world, causing thousands of people to fall sick with breathing problems and many even dying from this dreaded disease.

At first it appeared just as one more bit of news for us in India. However, as the year 2020 unfolded, this “Small” news item of 2019 turned into an unbelievable giant and became very real for everyone all over the world. This tiny virus grabbed centre stage, as Covid-19 started taking its toll with millions falling sick and dying. We, in India had never experienced anything quite like this and so we went about our daily routine as though everything was normal. Schools, Colleges, Offices, places of worship and other places seemed to be unaffected.

The Government was woken up from its slumber, when it realised that the virus was spreading like wild fire and was spiralling out of control. The number of people dying of Covid-19 was increasing by the minutes and many State Governments seemed unable to handle this grave situation. Doctors and pharmaceutical companies worked overtime to discover a vaccine that would help to contain the spread of this deadly virus. Covishield and Covaxin were put forth in India and administered on a war

footing. Normal life had come to a standstill. Schools, Colleges, Offices and places of worship were shut. Modes of transport were reduced to the bare minimum. People were urged to cover their mouths and noses with masks, to keep as much physical distance as possible and to sanitise or wash their hands with soap and water as often as possible. Lenten programmes, Masses and other religious services had to be stopped with immediate effect. People were at a loss as to how they must respond.

Besides suffering from sickness, people began to lose their jobs or forced to take a pay cut. In such trying times as these, some of the questions that were asked were:

1. Does God not care about what is happening to us?
2. For how long will this Pandemic last
3. Will our lives return to normal again?

On the other hand, however, we also believe that “Every cloud has a silver lining”. It was on October 7, 2021, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary that we began to see this silver lining. Places of worship were permitted to reopen, even as they were exhorted to follow all the Covid-19 protocols.

Listening to our pleas, Mary our mother has been interceding for us and the joy of coming back through the open doors of the Church can be seen on the faces of all who come. People are overjoyed to be able to come back and participate in worship in person. Catholics are delighted to be able to receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion. The light of Jesus is slowly overcoming the darkness which had begun to envelop the world due to the virus.

This is why the questions that we can now ask ourselves are:

1. What have I learnt from the Pandemic?
2. What message is God giving me today?
3. What is God saying to me now and I am ready to accept God's plans for me in building the kingdom?

Perhaps the opening of Churches on the fest of Our Lady of the Rosary is a gentle reminder to all of us to spend quality time

with the members of our families by reciting the daily rosary together, by enjoying our meals together and shutting off our mobiles during that time, by spending fun-time together as a family, by treating our grandparents and elders with love and respect, by visiting orphanages, homes for the aged and sharing time and gifts with them, by thanking God for all the gifts that we keep receiving, by adopting a poor family and helping them in practical ways and so on.

Everything we have is a gift from God. Thus each of us is invited to be loving and generous towards our less fortunate brothers and sisters regardless of caste and creed.

We pray that the Holy Family of Nazareth will be a model for all families. We also pray that the many experiences we have had during this pandemic will help us to bring about a change for the better.



‘The cannonball released 500 years ago causes the JESUIT tornado today....’



Based on the webinar conducted on 28th July, 2021 by Rev. Fr. Luke Rodrigues SJ and the sermon given by Rev. Fr. Terence Quadros SJ on 31st July, 2021

Mrs. Sweta Walter Dias

Asst. Teacher, St. Xavier's School, Nasik Road

Most of us must have heard of the '**Butterfly Effect**'. The Butterfly Effect is a part of the Chaos Theory. It describes how tiny variations can affect large and complex systems. For example, it considers the idea that if a butterfly flaps its wings in Asia, there could be a tornado in Texas as a result! We are today as a result of our past. Everything that happens in our life is the butterfly flap that will result into huge results in the future. A child watching a construction equipment work in awe results in him becoming a mechanical engineer.

500 years ago (1521) at the Battle of Pamplona, a cannonball injured brave Íñigo López. While recovering from surgery, Íñigo underwent a spiritual conversion and discerned a call to the religious life. In order to divert the weary hours of convalescence, he asked for the romances of chivalry, his favourite reading, but there were none in the castle, and instead his beloved sister-in-law,

Magdalena de Araoz brought him the life of Christ and the lives of saints.

Great things came from Ignatius's shattered leg. He recognized the errors of his sinful past. He had been a true man of the world with ambition for glory and fame, with passion to serve the powers of the day, with an eye for the women he met and impressed. He now turned his energy toward serving God as the saints had done in centuries past. He began to put his journey at the service of others, to lead others to find the consolation of God's ways as he had found it.

This moment certainly changed his life, but....this change was not a one-time event. It was a process that continued for over 20 years. He reinterpreted his dreams, desires and transformed his life to a new way of living. The cannonball striking Ignatius was the butterfly flap that has created the entire JESUIT community. The Society of Jesus is spread all over the

They have made their mark in the fields of education, music, science, and many more. There were many soldiers who were fighting along with Ignatius, many injured and many stood firm. But yet, the cannonball hit Ignatius. He could have died with the hit, but he survived it because God wanted it to be.

A man who was always ready to do anything for self-glory decided to work for the **GREATER GLORY OF GOD**. That was the butterfly effect that drove him to create a new congregation – THE SOCIETY OF JESUS. His self-realisation of, ' **What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet loses his soul?**' attracted many young enthusiastic boys, one of them was St. Francis Xavier.

Ignatius' transformation filled him with enthusiasm, obedience, humility and a spirit of working tirelessly in the vineyard of the Lord. This year is known as the **Ignatian Year** to commemorate his conversion.

A cannon shot. We all have some cannonball moments in our lives. We do face the butterfly effects in our lives. But have we been able to recognise the cannonballs in our lives, that have interrupted our dreams? Have we been able to see the hand of God in any of the

cannonballs shot at us? Are we ignoring these shots and still moving ahead? Are there some fixed views and opinions that is limiting our vision?

Let us just pause, reflect and think about our actions and deeds. Let us ask ourselves, “Am I doing the right thing?”, “Is this what God wants me to do?”

Ignatius found new life in his near death. God sends us cannonballs everyday. He gives us all many chances to see his infinite love and come back to him. We too should be attentive to the ways in which God is leading us through our own personal process of life – transformation. Just as Ignatius realised and turned back to his Creator, we too should mend our ways. And as we are a part of this humongous Jesuit family, we should never forget - **LOVE AND SERVE IN ALL THINGS FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD.**



“दृष्टी देते व्यक्तिमत्वाला आकार”

जीवन म्हणजे नशा लावणार्या
द्रक्षरसाच्या,वाईनच्या बाटलीप्रमाणे आहे.

आपल्यापैकी बरेच जण बाटलीवरील
फक्त लेबल,बाटलीवर छापलेले नाव म्हणजेच
बाह्य स्वरूप पाहून समाधानी असतात, मात्र
जीवनरूपी बाटलीतील नशेची चव घेणारे लोक
क्वचितच सापडतात.

दृष्टी - पाहण्याची पद्धत - दोन प्रकारची
असते

*एक बाह्य दृष्टी - ज्याद्वारे आपण फक्त बाह्य
स्वरूप म्हणजेच वरवरचे रूप पाहत असतो.

*दुसरी अंतरंगात डोकावण्याची दृष्टी - ही कमी
लोकांजवळ असते. ताजमहल पाहून कौतुक
करणारी आपण मंडळी,त्या भव्य अलिशान
इमारतीच्या पायथ्याशी जमिनीखाली असलेल्या
दगड,विटांचा विचार फारसा कधी करत नाही
दृष्टी ही सर्वसाधारणपणे बाह्य सौंदर्य पाहण्यात
तल्लीन असते.

“पर्वत कोळशाचा न वाटे
कुणा पाहावा,
परि धैर्याने तयाताला अमूल्य
हिरा पारखावा.”

कोळशाची खाण बघितल्यानंतर
नजरेला फार छान वाटत नाही.ही काळीकुट्ट
अंधारी जागा मनाला समाधान देत नाही,परंतु
त्या कोळशामध्ये दडलेला असतो मौल्यवान
हिरा जसे जसे धैर्याने म्हणजेच निराश न होता
आपण कोळशाचा एक एक थर बाजूला करू तसे
तसे आपल्याला त्यातून श्रीमंत करणारे हिरे
सापडतात.इथे देखील कोळशाच्या पर्वताचे
बाह्यरूप महत्त्वाचे ठरत नसून त्याच्या अंतरंगात
असलेले मूल्य महत्त्वाचे ठरते.

आपणा सर्वांना अंतरंगात डोकावण्यास भाग
पाडणारी एक सुंदर कथा आज मी सांगत आहे.-

एक राजपुत्र शिकारीसाठी जंगलात गेला
होता परंतु येताना रस्ता चुकला आणि इकडे-
तिकडे भटकत राहिला,जेव्हा त्याला तहान भूक
लागली तेव्हा जंगलातील एका झाडाची फळे
त्याने खाल्ली,तव्यातील पाणी पिऊन तहान
भागविली,परंतु ती फळे विषारी असल्याने त्या
फळांचा दुष्परिणाम- त्याची दृष्टी अचानक गेली
आणि तो आंधळा झाला,त्याला काहीही दिसत
नव्हते,तरी या अवस्थेत तो एकटाच चालू
लागला. चालता चालता तो एका खड्ड्यात
पडला,जखमा होऊन रक्त येऊ लागल्यावर तो
घाबरून ओरडू लागला.परंतु मदतीला कोण
येणार? कुठे जावे? हे त्याला समजत नव्हते
मोठ्याने ओरडू लागला,देवाचे नाव मोठ्याने
घेऊन तो प्रार्थना करू लागला आणि अचानक
त्याच्या कानावर मधुर सूर पडायला लागले,
कुणीतरी गात आहे असे त्याला वाटले आणि तो
त्या आवाजाच्या दिशेने हळूहळू चालू लागला.
त्याच्या ओरडण्याने एक जंगलकन्या
त्याच्याजवळ आली.तिने त्या आंधळ्या
राजपुत्राचा हात पकडून त्याला आपल्या घरी
नेले,त्याची सेवा केली,त्याच्या जखमा पुसल्या.
तिच्या प्रेमळ मदतीने व मंजुळ सुरामुळे तो
राजपुत्र खूप खुश झाला,हुरळून गेला व त्या
आनंदात त्याने तिला वचन दिले की,'दृष्टी परत
मिळाली की तो खात्रीने त्या जंगल कन्येशी
लग्न करून तिला राणी म्हणून राजवाड्यात
घेऊन जाईल. तिने मात्र काही न बोलता त्याला
फक्त स्मित केले.

काही दिवसांनंतर राजपुत्राचे मंत्रिमंडळ त्याच्या शोधात जंगलात आले.जोडीला राजवैद्य ही आले,त्यांनी राजपुत्राला काही औषधे दिली त्या औषधांमुळे राजपुत्राची दृष्टी परत आली त्याला दिसू लागले,तो इकडे तिकडे पाहू लागला तो खूप खुश होता. अचानक त्याची नजर जंगलकन्ये कडे गेली.तिला पाहून तो शहारला,कारण समोर उभी होती ती एक कुरूप जंगलकन्या. राजपुत्र तिला पाहून पुटपुटला, “लग्न करण्यापूर्वी देवाने मला दृष्टी परत दिली ते फार बरे झाले नाहीतर मी एका अत्यंत कुरूप स्त्रीबरोबर लग्न करून बसलो असतो.” हे उद्गार ऐकून ती जंगलकन्या फारच खिन्न झाली, व म्हणाली “देवाने तुम्हाला नव्हे,पण मला नवी दृष्टी दिली ते अत्यंत बरे झाले, नाहीतर मी केवढी मोठी चूक केली असती,फक्त बाह्यरूप पाहणार्या राजपुत्राशी मी लग्न करून बसले असते.” असे म्हणून ती जंगलकन्या पाठ फिरवून दूर निघून गेली.

किती सुंदर अर्थ या कथेत भरला आहे,

“गुण पारखावे अंतरीचे
भास दिखावा,
न पहावे काटे फणसाचे
गर ओळखावा.”

दिसते तसे नसते. काटेरी

फणसाकडे बघून काय वाटते?तर एक ओबड-धोबड काटेरी चिकट फळ. परंतु त्याच्या आत असणारे गोड,सुमधुर,अमृततुल्य गरे मात्र आपल्या जिभेला आणि शरीराला त्याच्या चवीने आनंदित करतात म्हणजेच येथेही फणसाचे खरे सौंदर्य आपल्याला त्याच्या बाह्य रूपामध्ये न दिसता त्याच्या अंतरंगात सापडते येथे देखील फणसाच्या दिखाऊपणा ला

अजिबात महत्व नाही.

म्हणजेच जोपर्यंत अंतरंगातील सौंदर्य दिसत नाही तोपर्यंत माणसे कुरूपतेचे कवच त्याचे आवरण फोडू शकत नाही.अंतरंगात डोकावण्याची दृष्टी मिळाली तरच प्रत्येकामध्ये दडलेला राजहंस निःसंदिग्धपणे खात्रीने ओळखता येईल.

अंततः मी हेच म्हणेल की,

“निळाशार सागर दिसण्यास मोहक दिसावा,
न भागवी परि तहान तो घोट कसा चाखावा.
सौंदर्य खरे आपुले अंतरंगात सामावले आहे,
दृष्टी शुद्ध ज्याची ते त्यानेच पाहिले आहे.”

निळा अथांग असा सागर जो डोळ्यांना आणि मनाला आपल्या सौंदर्याने तृप्त करतो. “ न भागावी परि तहान,तो घोट कसा चाखावा.” तो आपली तहान मात्र भागवू शकत नाही.सागराकडे अमाप पाणी असते,परंतू आपली तहान भागविण्याचे सामर्थ्य फक्त एखाद्या लहानशा झ-यामध्ये असते.म्हणजेच मोठेपण हे काही सौंदर्यामध्ये,आकारामध्ये नसते तर त्यातील अंतरंगांमधला गुणधर्म महत्त्वाचा असतो.म्हणून कोणालाही ओळखायचे असेल तर त्यांच्यातील अंतर्भूत असलेले गुण पाहायला हवेत न की त्यांचे सौंदर्य किंवा बाह्यरूप.

म्हणजेच दृष्टी दोन प्रकारची असते.

एक - बाह्य दृष्टी.व दुसरी - अंतरंगात डोकावण्याची दृष्टी.

'फरक इतकाच की बाह्य दृष्टीला एकसपायरी डेट असते अंतरंगाच्या दृष्टीला नाही.'

डायोनिसियस लोबो एस.जे

एका ठेचेचे महापरिवर्तन!!

जीवनात कधीना कधी तन मनाला ठेच ही लागतेच. त्यातून काहींचे जीवन परिवर्तन होते. काहीजण तो प्रसंग विसरूनही जातात.

वाटमारी वाल्याचा वाल्मिकी झाला. त्याने रामायण लिहिले. शौलाचा पाँल झाला. तो पाँल ख्रिस्तासाठी त्याच्या सेवेत रमला.

तसाच जीवनात ठेच लागलेल्या इंग्रेशीयसचा इनिगो झाला.

गांधींना अपमानकारक आणि बेकायदेशीरपणे रेल्वेच्या पहिल्या वर्गातून फलाटावर ढकलून फेकून देण्यात आले. बॅलिस्टरचा महात्मा झाला. स्वतंत्र भारताचे पितामह झाले. अशा परिवर्तनाची कितीतरी उदाहरणे जगात आहेत. संत इंग्रेशीयस लोयोला हा जेज्वीट संघाचा संस्थापक.

लढवय्या सैनिक. लढाईत जायबंदी झाला. त्या उपरतीतून त्याचे हिंसेतून अहिंसेत परिवर्तन झाले. "सारे जग कमावले आणि स्वताचा आत्मा गमवला तर काय लाभ?" ह्या प्रश्नाने त्याला ग्रासले. इस्पितळात उपचार घेत असता त्यावर तो चिंतन करी. आणि तेथेच त्याचे परिवर्तन झाले. जगाला अभिनव संत मिळाला.

वैयक्तिक परिवर्तनाबरोबर त्याने समाजपरिवर्तनाचे व्रत स्वीकारले. "वैयक्तिक पापांची मी पश्चाताप करून क्षमा

मुक्ती मिळवू शकतो.

पण जगात होणारा गोरगरीबांवरील अन्याय मी डोळे बंद ठेवून कसा काय पाहू शकतो. आणि तसे झाले तर ते सामाजिक पाप ठरेल. ह्यावर तो चिंतन करू लागला. ह्यासाठी त्याने ख्रिस्ताच्या सेवा आध्यात्मिकतेबरोबर शिक्षणावर भर दिला. मठातून तो मैदानात आला. एकान्तातून लोकांतात आला. शुन्यागारातून संसारात आला. सुरवंटाचे फुलपाखरू बनले. सर्वत्र भिरभिरले.

आद्यात्माचे नि ज्ञानाचे परागकण वेचण्यासाठी ते आध्यात्मिकतेच्या विविध बागेतील फुलांवरील आद्यात्माचा मकरंद वेचू लागले. सुमनांवरील "सु" मनाचे दव चूंबू लागले. पायाला चिकटलेले परागकण घेऊन एका फुलांवरून दुसऱ्या फुलांवर डुलू लागले. भिरभिरू लागले. त्या आद्यात्म साधनेतून अनेकांच्या जीवनात परिवर्तनाची फलधारणा होऊ लागली. त्याच वाटेवर त्याला प्रकांड पंडित तरणाबांड फ्रान्सिस झेवियर भेटला. तोही ह्याच परिवर्तनाच्या वाटेवर होता. तो भारतात आला. आणि फ्रान्सिससने भारतात शैक्षणिक क्रांती केली.

त्यावेळी राजेराजवाड्यातच केवळ शिक्षण मिळे.

दोघांनी ते सर्वसामान्यांना उघडे केले. शाळा, काँलेजे उघडली.

वैयक्तिक परिवर्तनातून सामाजिक परिवर्तन घडले.

आज जगभर विविध देशात ही
जेज्वीट फुलपाखरे पायाला भिंगरी
लागल्यागत विविध क्षेत्रात भिरभीरत आहेत.
त्यात आध्यात्मिक, शैक्षणिक, सामाजिक,
आर्थिक, राजकीय, पर्यावरणीय अनेक क्षेत्रात
त्यांनी आघाडी उघडली आहे. त्यांना कुठलेही
क्षेत्र वर्ज नाही.

सर्कसीतील विदुषेकापासून ते सांग्रसंगिता
पर्यंत. शाळा मास्तरापासून ते प्राध्यापक,
विज्ञान संशोधनापर्यंत. सामाजिक न्यायापासून
सुप्रिम कोर्टाच्या अंगणापर्यंत. साहित्य, शास्त्र,
कला क्रीडा, मनोरंजन..... आध्यात्मापासून ते
अंतराळातील ग्रह, तारे, विवरे शोधण्यापर्यंत
ही मंडळी गढून गेलेली असते.

लढाईत जोरदार वेगाने तोफेचा गोळा येतो.
तो पायाला लागतो.

सैनिक जायबंदी होतो.

इस्पितळात "ख्रिस्तानुवर्तन"

वाचता वाचता परिवर्तन होते.

सैनिकाचा धर्म सेवक बनतो.

हे सारे जीवनातील एक ठेच लागल्याने घडते.

20 मे 1521 साली घडलेल्या

या घटनेला यंदा पाचशे वर्षे पूर्ण होतात. ह्या

ठेचेच्या घटनेची आठवण म्हणून यावर्षी संत

इग्रेशीयसच्या "महापरिवर्तनाचे वर्ष" म्हणून

साजरे होत आहे.

त्या वर्षाच्या वाटचालीस शुभेच्छा!!

शुभास्ते पंथानः सन्तू

..... विवेक

वेन्सी डिमेलो एस.जे

जिवंत संत

संत म्हणजे परमेश्वराचे प्रतिनिधी असतात. संत समाजाचा चांगुलपणा आणि दैवी तसेच मानवी मुल्यांची शिकवणिक आपल्या आचरणातून देतात.

संताची ही मांदीयाळी पृथ्वीवर सर्व समुदायात पाहवयास मिळते. विभिन्न काळात, विभिन्न भूप्रदेशात संत जन्माला आले. आज ही हयात आहेत आणि भविष्यातही असतील. उदा. करोना वॉरियर, डॉक्टर्स, समाजसेवक, परिचारीका, ऑक्सीजन सिलेंडर मोफत देणारे, मोफत सेवा देणारे ऑटो रिक्शा ड्रायव्हर.

संत मंडळीचा बारकाईने अभ्यास केला कि त्यांचं दैनंदिन जीवन हाच चमत्कार होता. त्यांनी काम, क्रोध, लोभ, मोह, मद, मत्सर ह्या षड्गुण विजय मिळवला. आपण सुध्दा त्यांचं अनुकरण करू शकतो. आणि आपलं जीवन सुखकर करू शकतो. अगदी छोट्या छोट्या कामातून आपण चांगली कामे करू शकतो. आपल्याला संपुर्ण जग प्रकाशमान करता येणार नाही परंतु काजवा बनून एखादया व्यक्तीपुरता आपण प्रकाश निर्माण करू शकतो.

एका दिवाळीतील गोष्ट -

एका समारंभासाठी गेलो होतो, विदयुत रोषनाईने आणि दिव्याच्या प्रखर उजेडाने हॉल आणि परिसर अगदी उजळून

निघाला होता. कार्यक्रम ऐन रंगात आला आणि अचानक विजपुरवठा खंडीत झाला, क्षणाआधी उजळत असलेला परिसर मिट्ट काळोखात बुडाला. एवढ्यात कोणीतरी म्हणालं अरे बाहेर कोपऱ्यात तेवत असलेली ती पणती कोणीतरी आत आणारे. ती मिणमिणती पणती हॉलच्या मध्यभागी ठेवली गेली आणि सर्वांचा जिव भांडयात पडला. प्रखर दिव्याइतका प्रकाश देणे त्या पणतीला शक्य नव्हतं पण आपल्या मंद प्रकाशाने तीने तो मिट्ट काळोख पांगळा केला. अंधार सुसह्य झाला. आपली भुमिका ही अशी असली पाहिजे. एकावेळी संपुर्ण समाज्याचं दुःख अडिअडचणी, रोग, आजार, आपण नाहीसा नाही करू शकत पण थोडीशी फुंकर घालू शकतो ना ! संताचा एखादा गुण जरी आपण आत्मसाथ करू शकलो तर आपण त्यांचे अनुयायी होऊ शकतो.

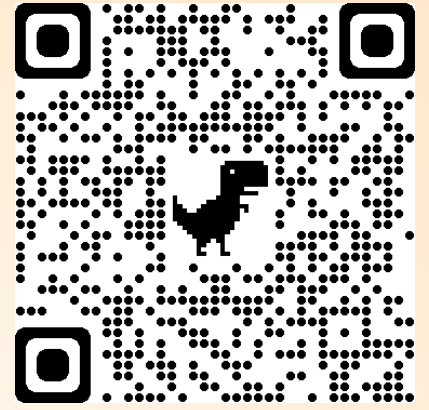
संत तुकाराम म्हणतात नाही संतपण मिळत हो हारी हिंडता कपारी रानी वनी नये मोल देता धनाची ये राशी नाहि ते आकाशी, पाताळी ते तुका म्हणे मिळो जिवाचिये साठी नाही तरी गोष्ट बोलु नये. संत तुकाराम इथे स्पष्ट शब्दात सांगतात आपण आपले जीवन जगाच्या सेवेसाठी अर्पण केल पाहिजे प्रसंगी बलिदान हि केलंतर संतपण प्राप्त होते अन्यथा नाही.

ऑगस्टीन डिमेलो एस.जे



Daily Reflection

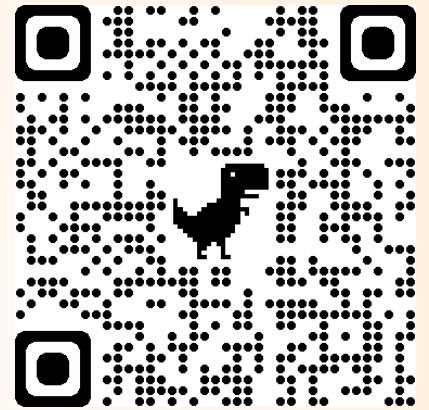
I have a youtube channel and I post reflections on it every day. You can reach my channel by scanning the QR Code or Tapping on the QR Code. Do subscribe to My channel. **Subscription is Free**



-Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ



The Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Nashik also has a youtube channel. On this channel the 12 noon Mass is live online everyday. You can reach this channel by Scanning the QR Code or Tapping on the QR Code. Do subscribe to this channel. **Subscription is Free**



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