

# IJ MATTERS



NASHIK, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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## SHRINE HAPPENINGS

Fr Antonio Jimenez Jurschik (known as Fr. Tony) went to his eternal reward on October 20, 2025. His death was a fairy-tale death. It seemed like God and he had scripted it. This is what happened. Every afternoon he would have a short siesta after lunch. For this, he would not lie on his bed, but relax on his easy chair with his legs stretched out and up on another chair. The afternoon of that October was no different. After lunch, he went to his room and lay on his easy chair. We do not know the hour when the Lord called Fr. Tony to himself, but we think it was between the time he reclined on the chair and 4 pm. This was because he would come to the Refectory at 4 pm every evening to have a cup of cold coffee. On October 20, 2025, he had not come to the Refectory. Since tea time is flexible for the members of the community, no one noticed that he had not come. When he was not in the Refectory for supper, Frs. Vinay and Bosco went to his room to check on him. They found his earthly body reclining in his easy chair and his heavenly body with the Lord. Fr. Tony came to India as a young seminarian and served in India for 65 years. He worked in villages, towns and cities and was a versatile personality. He had an excellent memory for persons and dates. He also had a wonderful sense of humour. Fr. Tony now rests with the Lord and we thank God for all the wonderful work he allowed Fr. Tony to do.



The first day of November every year, is a day of promise. It is a day of hope, because we celebrate the feast of all Saints on this day. We look at the Saints who have gone before us as inspiration and say to ourselves, "If they could, we too can" (see below for more on the feast). Since as Christians we believe that when we die, our life is not ended, merely changed, we celebrate and remember the faithful departed on the day after we celebrate the feast of All Saints (see below for more on the Commemoration of the Faithful departed). This day also reminds us of the temporariness of life. It reminds that everything is passing and relative, only God is absolute and permanent. It also informs us of the continuity of this life and the next and the continuity that we can still share with those who have gone before us.

On November 9, every year, we celebrate the solemnity of the dedication of the Lateran Basilica. The Basilica of St John Lateran is the cathedral of Rome, the cathedra, or Chair, at which the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, presides. In order to express devotion and unity of all Catholics to the successor of Peter, the Church commemorates the dedication of the Lateran Basilica. Since the Pope presides in charity over the universal Church, the Lateran Basilica is affectionately called the "mother and head of all the churches of Rome and the world".

When the Cathedral in Milan was finished, in the vast throng of people assembled for the dedication, a little girl cried out in childish glee, as she pointed to it: I helped build that. One of the guards challenged her: "What? Show me what you did." The girl replied, "I carried the lunch box for my father, while he worked there." The cathedral, the Church the Basilica is not primarily a building but the people of God. Each of us and all of us help build up the Church.

The first Christians gathered to pray in private homes. To be a Christian was for the first three hundred years after the Resurrection of Christ a crime of treason against the Roman state. Therefore, believers would meet secretly to hear the Gospel and break the bread. Today's feast commemorates the end of those many long years of terrible persecutions and martyrdom and the dedication of the Christians' first public place of worship.

While this was a welcome change for the first Christian community, it also began to soon struggle with a dilemma. The source of Jesus' power is found in weakness and poverty. While being an underground church this was easy to accept. Now, being accepted by the state, Christianity's power began to be aligned with fame and fortune, buildings and property, prestige and status. The church began to take on the political structure of the Roman state. Officials began to be identified by secular titles such as "prince of the church" (Cardinal) and "lord" (Bishop). While it is advantageous to have a place to worship and also advantageous to have a structure to maintain a sense of order, both, however, can also prevent us from encountering God by presenting an image of God that is quite different from the one that Jesus presented and revealed.

Christians, being identified with Christ in Baptism, are also temples of God, living temples of the Holy Spirit. While it is true that the very orderly, stable and universal structure is surely to be celebrated in this feast and we need the certainty and conviction that comes from something that is consistent and bigger than ourselves, we also need to accept the fact that this is not all that the Church is. We also celebrate weakness in today's feast. First, the weakness and numerous failures of each of us individuals who make up the Church, and also the failures and shortcomings of the Church as a whole. Both are in constant need of cleansing by the head of the Church Jesus Christ who continues to make all things whole.



Fr. Errol was in the Pallottine Pastoral Centre at Chicalim, Goa, giving a Retreat to 65 Pallottine priests serving in different parts of India. It began on October 20, 2025 and ended on October 24, 2025. With God's grace, all the priests got into the retreat from the first day. The Spirit of God worked in each of the priests according to his needs. They went back to their ministries with a renewed sense of purpose and focus. We thank God for their persons and their service.



With the grace of God and the blessings of the Infant Jesus, The Jesuit team at the Shrine of the Infant Jesus conducted and completed the Eleventh Residential Laity Retreat from November 14-16, 2025. 55 lay persons (men/women youth) made the Retreat. All were touched by God's Spirit.



We thank each of you profusely for your generosity to the Infant Jesus. Rest assured of our constant prayers for you all. May the Infant Jesus bless you abundantly and may Joseph and Mary keep interceding.

Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ

November 2025

## SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

In the month of October 2025, the students of Grade 8 organised “Canteen Day” for their fellow students and for the teachers. They had food stalls selling food items which they had bought from outside vendors or made at home. These were sold at a rate which was slightly higher than the cost. They made a decent profit, but decided to use part of it for a trip to our school in Ambatha in order to bond with the students there and to donate in cash and kind. Below are the experiences of some of the students.

Hello, I am Shavan Shyamal Guchait, from St. Xavier’s ICSE School. On November 12, 2025, we had visited the Prabodhan Vidyalaya in Ambatha. As we reached there the students welcomed us with cultural lezim dance and tilak. There are many things that we learned from them. The students were polite and well mannered. The school was clean and it seemed that the students took responsibility for it. Their discipline and polite behaviour made a deep impact on us. Though they are as young as we are, they shoulder more responsibility than we do. We learned that we should be grateful for what we have and excel in everything that we do. We need to constantly think of those less fortunate than we are and when we can reach out a helping hand to them, we must do so. Our visit to Prabodhan Vidyalaya, was a memorable day for us.





It was the most memorable experience of my life. It made me reflect on how blessed I am to have everything. I often complain about things I do not have, yet when I encountered

students of Prabodhan Vidyalaya, and saw how they manage with so little, it opened my eyes. I have loving parents, a beautiful home, good food to eat and the list is never ending, while most of the children we met have only the bare minimum. Yet, they do not complain and are content. They are practical and down to earth and very disciplined. Most important of all is that they are happy. I am happy with what I learned from them and was inspired by them in more ways than one.



The Ambatha trip was a fantastic experience for me and for all my companions. The hospitality and welcome dance and touched my heart because of its spontaneity and warmth. The students, teachers and all the staff members taught us something each in their own way. Their discipline, way of living and their maturity taught us to be mature and take responsibility for our words and actions. It also taught us to be grateful for the numerous blessings great and small that we receive each day. It taught us to respect our elders=, teachers, parents and not to ever waste food. It has motivated me to study hard and make my teachers, school and parents proud.



I learned the value of kindness from the children at Ambatha. They were extremely kind to us. Other values that I learned was the use of time and how not to take for granted all that I have. I have learned how to accept responsibility for myself and for my words and actions. I will make every attempt to live out these values in my life.



Our Fotsal (Rink Football) team did the School proud. They won the District level tournament conducted on November 17, 2025 and have qualified for the State level competition. We wish them all God's blessings. We know they will not focus so much on winning but on playing as a team and doing their very best.



Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ  
November 2025

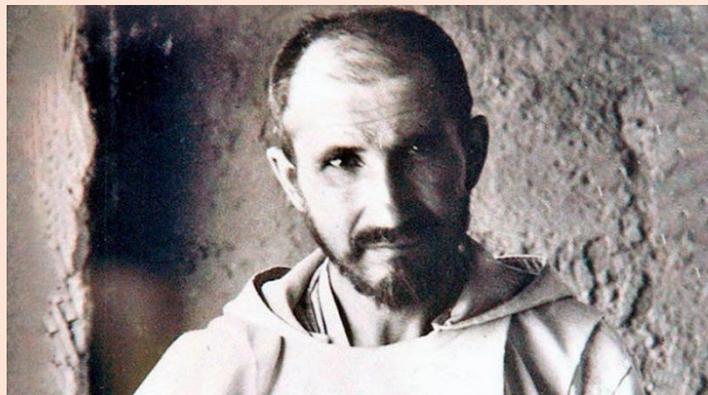
## **Beyond Worldly Ambition: The Radical Surrender of Augustine and Foucauld**

It was a grey spring morning as I prepared to leave the suburbs of Paris, hoping the day would turn out to be sunny. I quickly went through my usual morning routine and, with hurried steps, made my way out of Eckla toward the Noisy-le-Grand metro station. Fortunately, the metro wasn't crowded, and before long, I arrived at the station near Gare Saint-Lazare, where I was scheduled to catch a train to a pilgrimage site two hours away. I had arrived early, though, because I planned to visit St. Augustine's Church, which was just a short walk from the metro station. I was scheduled to meet my friend Yesudas, a Little Brother of the Gospel, in this church. It's uncanny that Charles de Foucauld experienced a profound religious awakening here.

As I sat in quiet reflection with Yesudas near the preserved confessional, I couldn't help but think of the parallels between St. Charles de Foucauld's transformation and St. Augustine's story. Both had once led chequered lives, only to later surrender themselves completely to God. The similarities between their journeys are striking, and I began to consider how their respective paths could be compared.

From restless seekers to unwavering believers Before their conversions, both Augustine and Foucauld were brilliant, in as much as they were restless human beings. Augustine, born in 354 CE, was an accomplished rhetorician who dabbled in pagan philosophies and Manichaeism while living a hedonistic lifestyle. His famous, yet sublime, example of honest prayer—"Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet"—perfectly encapsulates his inner conflict. Similarly, the 19th-century French aristocrat Charles de Foucauld was a soldier, a passionate explorer of what was then inaccessible Morocco, and a self-professed agnostic. His quest for knowledge and his adventure as a disguised Jew was ultimately a search for meaning. In both men, we see a deep intellectual curiosity and an unfulfilled longing for truth that were the driving forces behind their initial restlessness.

Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916) was born into French nobility and experienced a significant early loss of dear family members, leading him to a wayward youth and abandonment of his Catholic faith.

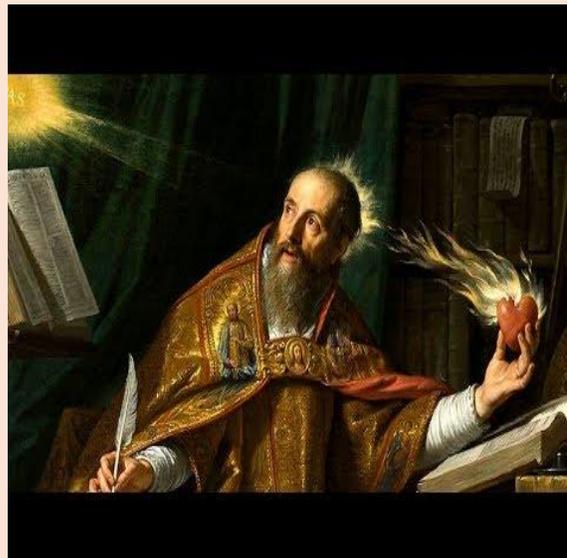


His life took a dramatic turn in October 1886. After a period of military service and exploration in North Africa, where encounters with devout Muslim communities

challenged his agnosticism, Charles returned to Paris. He sought counsel from Abbé Henri Huvelin at this very Church of Saint-Augustine. Initially intending only, a conversation, Huvelin urged him to confess. Charles described this confession as a complete surrender. He later stated, "As soon as I believed that God existed, I understood that I could do nothing else but live for Him alone."

This pivotal confession marked his conversion. Guided by Huvelin, Charles embraced a life of radical faith and humility. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, served as a handyman with the Poor Clares, joined the Trappists, and eventually left the order to live as a hermit and missionary among the poor and marginalized in the Algerian desert, seeking to emulate the hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth.

**St. Augustine:** A climactic moment in the garden: The conversion journey of St. Augustine stands as one of the most compelling spiritual narratives in Christian history. Emerging from years of inner turmoil and restless searching, Augustine's transformation was marked by intellectual struggle, emotional depth, and a dramatic spiritual awakening. As a young man in late antiquity, Augustine pursued a path of loose living and philosophical curiosity, searching for truth in various places. He spent nearly a decade exploring Manichaeism, a dualistic religion, but found its answers unsatisfying. His intellectual explorations also included encounters with Neoplatonism and skepticism, reflecting his deep desire for meaning and certainty.



Augustine's journey toward faith was shaped by key influences, notably the prayers of his mother Monica and the eloquent sermons of Bishop Ambrose of Milan. Personal stories of other converts, especially the tale of St. Anthony of the Desert, intensified Augustine's inner struggle and longing for transformation. The turning point came in the late summer of 386 CE. In a garden at Milan, Augustine was tormented by his inability to let go of his desires and fully embrace a Christian life. Then, in a moment of anguish, he heard the voice of a child chanting, "Tolle, lege" ("Take it and read"). Seeing this as a divine sign, he

picked up a Bible and read Romans 13:13–14—a passage urging moral integrity and transformation. Instantly, Augustine felt his heart "flooded with light," a profound peace dispelling his doubts and fears. After his conversion experience, Augustine withdrew from public life and spent months in spiritual reflection and study, ultimately adopting a more ascetic lifestyle.

**The aftermath:** A radical change in direction: For both men, their conversion experiences were not just isolated moments but catalysts for a completely new life. Both shed their worldly ambitions and embraced lives of asceticism and service. Augustine returned to Africa, He became one of the most influential theologians in Christian history, reflecting on his journey in his celebrated Confessions.

Foucauld lived as a 'Universal Brother' with the Tuaregs in the African Sahara imitating the "Hidden Life" of Jesus in Nazareth. He inspired religious groups like the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, Little Brothers Sisters of the Gospel among others.

### **A shared legacy of humility and grace**

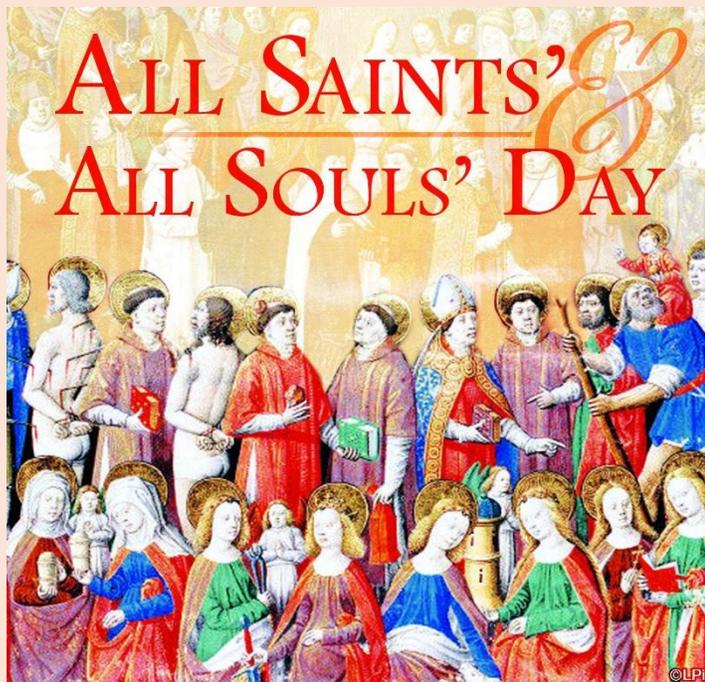
While their conversions took different forms, the parallels between Augustine and Foucauld remain profound. Both saints teach that personal transformation often follows a period of great internal struggle and that no one is too far gone for redemption. Their legacies remind the faithful that a life of ambition can give way to a life of service and that the search for meaning ultimately finds its rest in God. Their stories, though separated by the vastness of history, serve as timeless testaments to the power of conversion and the enduring message of grace.

Dr (Fr.) Conrad Pessa SJ

## The Saints and the Departed

We celebrate dear memories  
Of Saints both known and hidden  
And Others who have passed in death  
Trying best what God has bidden

For we all share Christ's Risen Life  
Though saint or sinner be  
And Christ unites us all as one  
To share his destiny



So, we rejoice in myriad Saints  
And Others gone before  
For every life is saved in Christ  
Jubilant evermore

Fr. Godfrey D'lima SJ

**Called to Be Saints: Living the Communion of Saints Today**

Some time ago, I received a prayer request from an acquaintance who said, “Father, please keep me in your prayers as my husband and I celebrate 30 years of married life.” I assured her of my prayers, and with light humour she added, “Father, after 30 years of marriage, I think I’ll go straight to heaven and become a saint — after tolerating my husband and children all these years!”

Her words, though said in jest, carried a beautiful truth. Holiness is often lived in the simplicity and struggles of everyday life — in patience, love, and faithfulness amid the ordinary challenges we face.

### **All Saints Day: Remembering Our Heavenly Companions**

On the 1st of November, we celebrate All Saints Day — a day dedicated to remembering and honouring all the saints of the Catholic Church. But what does it really mean to be a saint?

St. Paul often addressed the early Christians as saints. In his Letter to the Romans (1:7), he writes: “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

For Paul, “saints” did not mean only canonized holy people. It referred to all the baptized — men and women loved by God, consecrated to Him, and striving to live in holiness. In that sense, each of us is called to be a saint.

### **Who Are the Saints?**

In a broader sense, saints are all those who follow the teachings of Jesus and seek to live by His example. More narrowly, the Church uses the term to refer to those holy men and women who, through extraordinary virtue and faithfulness, have entered heaven.

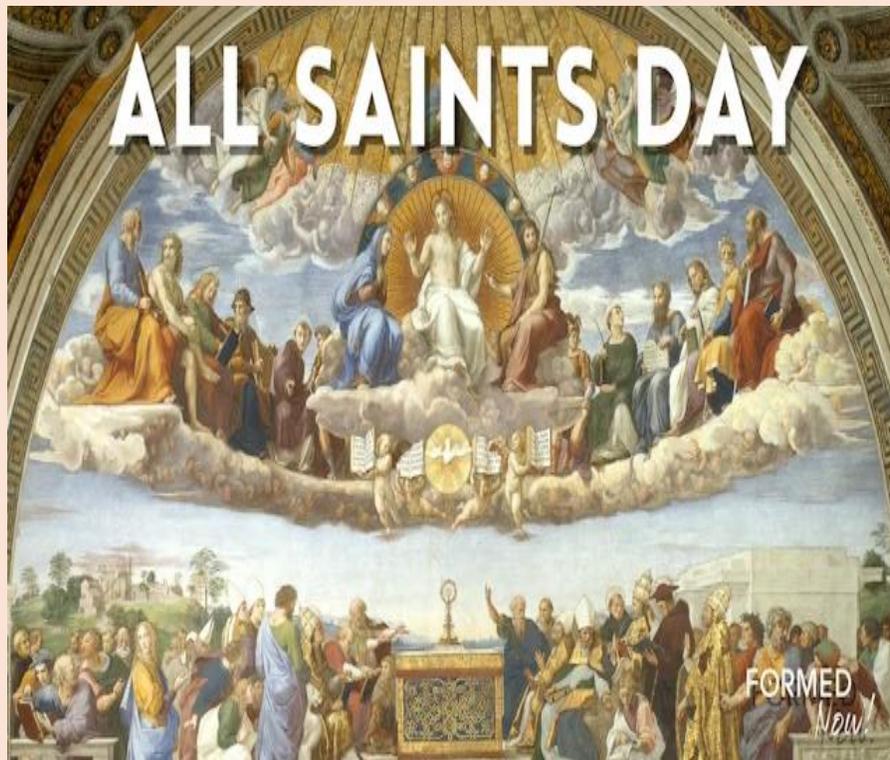
When we recite the Creed at Mass, we profess our faith in “the communion of saints.” This beautiful phrase expresses the deep spiritual bond that unites all members of the Church — those on earth, those in purgatory, and those in heaven.

#### **The Threefold Communion**

The Communion of Saints refers to the union that exists between:

- The Church Pilgrim — all of us here on earth, striving to live lives faithful to Christ;
- The Church Penitent — the souls in purgatory being purified and prepared for heaven;
- The Church Triumphant — the saints who now see God face to face in eternal joy.

As the Apostles’ Creed teaches, “What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?” In this divine communion, we are never alone. The saints accompany us, intercede for us, and inspire us on our journey toward God.



### **Saints as Role Models and Friends**

There was a time when most Christian names were those of saints — Matthew, Anthony, Catherine, Teresa, and so on. The purpose was to have a heavenly role model to imitate and to be inspired by their life of virtue.

The saints are not distant figures from the past. They are our companions and friends in faith. They pray for us and encourage us to persevere. Their lives remind us that holiness is possible — not just for the few, but for all.

### **Who Are Our Role Models Today?**

Today, it's worth asking ourselves: Who are our inspirations? Do we look up only to movie stars, sports icons, or business tycoons whose goals are often materialistic? Or do we seek models who help us live with faith, compassion, and holiness?

The saints challenge us to set our sights higher — to pursue goals that bring us closer to God and to others in love.

### **Pope Francis: “Rejoice and Be Glad”**

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (“Rejoice and Be Glad”), Pope Francis reminds us that we are all called to holiness — to be saints in our own unique way. He writes that holiness is not reserved for a few extraordinary people but is lived in “the patience of parents who raise their children with immense love,” and in “the quiet perseverance of those who work to support their families.”

Holiness is found in the small, daily gestures of kindness, forgiveness, and service — in those who show compassion to the elderly, patience with co-workers, and love in family life.

## **Our Call Today**

As we celebrate All Saints Day, let us take inspiration from our saintly companions in heaven. Let us ask for their prayers and intercession, so that we too may walk faithfully in the footsteps of Christ.

May we live our daily lives with love, humility, and generosity — polishing the ordinary moments of life until they shine with the light of holiness. For in the end, as Pope Francis reminds us, “To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest, or a religious. We are all called to be holy — by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.”

Fr Wesley D’Costa SJ

# Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

It is a joy to celebrate  
A Church that stood for ages  
The Lateran Basilica  
Has withstood history's stages

Its splendid arty heritage  
Will earn a tourist's praise  
For those who care for buildings rare  
Their spirits it will raise



But now in churches everywhere  
God meets us face to face  
To bring the human heart to peace  
And find his guiding grace

The Lateran Basilica  
Was once the pride of Rome?  
But wherever we converge in prayer  
God comes to be at home

Fr. Godfrey D'lima SJ

## **International Day for Tolerance**

An eye for an eye, a life for a life  
This is the play of fools  
So, no one will be left alive  
When vengeance makes the rules

God's peoples rise up everywhere  
To change that script of dross  
And spread to all forgiving love  
As Christ upon his cross



And with his Spirit understand  
That every human quest  
For truth and justice in this world  
Is truly heaven blest

Our tolerance will reconcile  
And worthless feuds will cease  
Together we will build God's plan  
Of harmony and peace

Fr. Godfrey D'lima

## Universal Children's Day

The cry of children everywhere  
Has pain and joy as one  
They call for love and human care  
In life's long race to run

Some children hunger, some are ill  
Some lack a school to learn  
Some who's refuge comes to nil  
When life's a cruel spurn



Jesus showed a heartfelt care  
For children in his day  
And taught that little children bear  
The cue to heaven's way

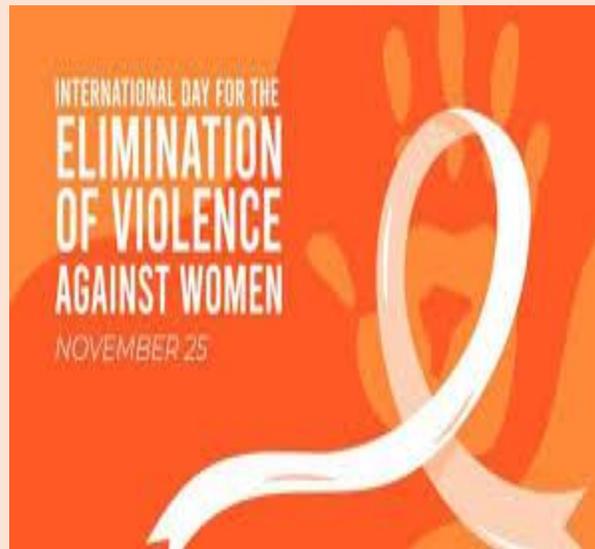
So never let a chance go by  
To reach a child in need  
That kindness will bring heaven nigh  
When shown in word and deed

Fr. Godfrey D'lima SJ

## **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

The human race is shamed today  
For all its mindless strife  
Against the Woman God has made  
A partner for Man's life

When Men and Women stand as one  
To serve what's just and true  
Their striving for the common good  
Will change our times anew



And there will be God's peace on earth  
To live our fullest lives  
When every Woman every Man  
Is sacred in our eyes

Fr. Godfrey D'lima SJ

## Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

The feast of Christ the Eternal King was introduced through the encyclical *Quas Primas* – (“In the first”) of Pope Pius XI on December 11, 1925. One main purpose of the encyclical was to communicate hope to a world which seemed to be giving into despair. Another purpose was to give the world a whole new idea of kingship, dominion and authority. There could be no better model of kingship which the Church could put before the world than Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the servant king.

This feast is celebrated every year on the last Sunday in Ordinary time. It ends the Ordinary time of the liturgical year and it begins the preparation for Advent and the coming of the redeemer child at Christmas.

The focus of the feast is on Kingship. David who was king of the whole of Israel was constantly reminded that the Lord wanted him to be a Shepherd king. He began life as a shepherd of the flocks of his father. Now, he is shepherd over the people. Like the shepherd looks after his flock and leads them, so David will look after his people and lead them. The anointing of David as king is not something done on a mere whim. It is the Lord who ordained it. It is the Lord who said that David would be shepherd and rule over Israel. David had shown his care for his people when he led them out and brought them to the glory that they now experience.



The kingdom that God established in David promised newness. The shape of power in this kingdom will be governed by shepherding and covenant making. Future hope has, for the moment, become present hope. This present hope was made even more visible when God chose and anointed Jesus to be king, not only over one country, but over the whole of humanity. Like David before him, Jesus would also be a shepherd of the people. The covenant that he made with God would be a covenant on the Cross. It would be an eternal covenant, one that no number of negatives could ever erase.

The salvation that Jesus effected on the Cross is made even more visible and more tangible in the response of Jesus to those crucified with him. Though rebuked by one of the thieves, Jesus does not react negatively. He is willing to accept even this taunt. The pronouncement that Jesus makes to the thief who asks for remembrance is solemn. It is the last of the six “Amen” sayings in Luke and the only one addressed to a person. It is also the last of the “Today” pronouncements. That “Amen” and “Today” have been used together is an indication that the pronouncement is emphatic and that there is to be no delay. What Jesus promises will happen now.

The salvation pronounced to one of the thieves on the Cross is also the salvation being pronounced to each of us who are willing to receive it. This is because, through his passion and death, Jesus has rescued us, as the letter to the Colossians points out. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and sin. He has transferred us into the kingdom of light and all that is good. It is therefore, in the visible image of Jesus Christ that we can comprehend who God is and what God wants to do for each of us. God wants the whole of creation to be reconciled in Jesus. God wants all of creation to be saved in the shepherd and self-sacrificing king.

As we come to the close of another liturgical year, and as we prepare to welcome Christ our eternal king, we need to realize that our king can come only if we are willing to open our hearts and minds wide to receive him. We can do this by removing from our minds and hearts anything that will prevent us from receiving and accepting him. We can do this by removing selfishness and self-centeredness that makes us seek only our own good rather than the good of others. We can do this by reaching out in love and forgiveness as he did, even when on the Cross. Will we ready our minds and hearts to receive our King?

To hear my homily on the feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universes click on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phUpq1iD6VA>

Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ

## Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

You are a King of faithfulness  
Strong in truth's conviction  
No matter what the times will say  
Your values are not fiction

You show the way for all our race  
To reach out love and care  
And turn the tide for those in need  
Saving them from despair



Your kingship paid the heaviest price  
To combat deathly sin  
With you we'll always give our best  
God's Kingdom so to win

Fr. Godfrey D'lima SJ

## पोप चौदावे लिओ ह्यांचे गरीबाप्रतीप्रेम परिपत्रक ! वेन्सी डिमेलो.

दिवंगत पोप फ्रान्सिस ह्यांच्यानंतर येशूचा जेष्ठ एकनिष्ठ शिष्य नि येशूचा वारस \*संत पिटर ह्यांच्या जागी ८ मे २०२५ रोजी पोप चौदावे लिओ ह्यांची रोम शहरी जागतिक कॅथोलिक पोप पदी निवड झाली.

आणि चार महिन्यांच्या अवधीत त्यांनी रीवाजानुसार गरीबांच्या बाजूने कौल देणारे गरिबाप्रतीप्रेम नावाचे परिपत्रक प्रसिद्ध केले. आणि जगातील साऱ्या पुरोहित वर्गाला गावकुसाबाहेर, गाव परीघावर, गाव सरहद्दीवर, राहणाऱ्या खेड्यातील गरिबांकडे चला तेथे तुम्हास \*येशू ख्रिस्त बोलावित आहे. सेवेसाठी हाक देत आहे. अशी हाक दिली आहे. असा फतवा काढला आहे. पोप पदी विराजमान होणारी हर एक असामी रीवाजाप्रमाणे त्यांच्या कार्यकालीन कारकीर्दीत असा संदेश जगाला देत असते.

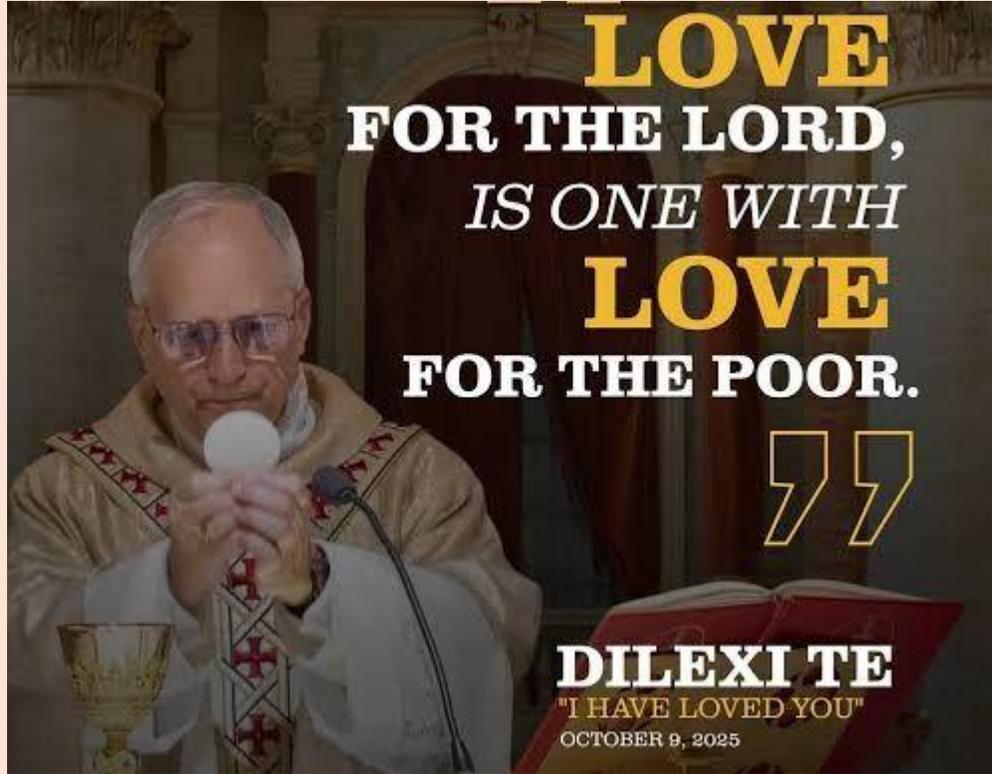
आधीचे पोप फ्रान्सिस हे स्वतः ह्या गरीब आणि साधेपणाचे प्रतिक होते. ते तसे साधेपणाचे अनुसरण करीत असत. त्यांनी आपल्या कार्यालयातील बसण्याची मऊ गादी पसंत केली नाही. त्यांचे बसण्याचे आसन येशूच्या लाकडी क्रूसाप्रमाणे होते. ते तेथील वॅटिकन शहरातील भव्य घरात न रहाता भाड्याची खोली करून रहात होते. आणि तेथून दररोज आपल्या कार्यालयात येत होते. ते व्रतस्त होते. त्यांनी साधेपणाचे, गरीबीचे जीवन जगण्याचे आमरण व्रत घेतले होते.

अंत्योदय म्हणजेच शेवटचा माणूस, तळागळातील माणूस त्याचा उदय व्हावा. त्याचा उद्धार व्हावा. सर्वांगीण सर्वस्पर्शी तारण व्हावे. म्हणून पोपपदी असलेली प्रत्येक व्यक्ती ही बांधिलकी, ही गरिबाप्रत प्रीतीची सहभागिता जपत असतात. इतरांसाठी जगत असतात. \*Jesus lived for others. येशूचे चरित्र एका ओळीत वर्णन करायचे ठरवले तर तो इतरांसाठी जगला. आणि त्या येशूचे अनुकरण पोपने करावे ही अपेक्षा असते.

दुखपिडिताने, आपत्तीने, गरीबीने होते जग भरले त्या मधूनी गाईच्या गोठी तो जन्मा आला. असे येशूचे सार्थ वर्णन केले जाते. देवाने पाहिले की त्याने निर्माण केलेले जग खस्ता खात आहे. धर्मांधांच्या ग्लानीत पहुडले आहे. ज्यांनी प्रजेचे रयतेचे रक्षण करावे तेच ऐष आरामात बसून, खाऊन पिऊन, मस्तवाल होऊन रयतेचे भक्षक बनले आहेत. मोठमोठाली ओझी जनतेवर लादत आहेत. आणि त्यास हातभारही लावत नाहीत.

मस्तवाल मिजासखोर माणूस मीच निर्माण केलेल्या पृथ्वीला लुटत आहे. लूचत आहे. हे देवाने पाहिले. स्वार्थापोटी सर्व क्षेत्रात जग विद्रूप करीत आहे. हे सर्व बंद व्हावे. आणि देवाचे राज्य परत अवतरावे. देव प्रेम आहे. करुणामयी आहे ह्यांची जाणीव करून देण्यासाठी येशू ह्या जगात गरीब होऊन आला होता. त्याचेच प्रतिनिधित्व \*पोपमहाशय करीत असतात. ह्या जगात आशेचे यात्रेकरू म्हणून लोकांसोबत चालत असतात.

ह्या सर्वाला येशू प्रमाणेच बायबलमधील संदेष्ट्यांची गरीबाप्रत असलेली पार्श्वभूमी आहे. अन्यायाविरुद्ध असलेली ठाम भूमिकाही तेव्हाच महत्वाची आहे. तत्कालीन संदेष्ट्यांनी अन्यायी परिस्थिती विरुद्ध परमेश्वरी संदेशाचे आसूड ओढले आहेत. कारण गरीबांवरील अन्यायाचा खरा अर्थ म्हणजे, धार्मिक कर्मकांडात राजकीय, सामाजिक, आर्थिक व न्यायात अडकलेले आहे. त्यात सामावलेले आहे. या संबंधी संदेष्टा आमोस म्हणतो, \* "न्याय शुद्ध पाण्याप्रमाणे आणि धार्मिकता प्रचंड लोंढ्याप्रमाणे वाहो" (आमोस: ५:२४) मीखा म्हणतो, "नीतीने वागणे आवडीने दया करणे व आपल्या देवासमागमे राहून नम्रतेने चालणे यावाचून परमेश्वर मनुष्याजवळ काही एक मागत नाही.. (मीखा:६:८) यशया संदेष्टा म्हणतो, "तू आपले अन्न भुकेल्यास वाटावे. तू विकालंगास व निराश्रितास आपल्या घरी न्यावे. उघडा दृष्टीस पडल्यास त्यास वस्त्र द्यावे. तू आपल्या दीन दलितापासून तोंड लपवू नकोस. हाच तो उपास नाही काय." (यशया:५८:७) अशा त-हेने खऱ्या धार्मिकतेचा संबंध अशा अन्यायी सामाजिक, आर्थिक व राजकीय सत्ता न्यायाशी जोडण्यात आला आहे.



त्याकाळी इस्त्रायल राजाला देवाचा प्रतिनिधी मानण्यात येई. पण राजकीय सामाजिक व आर्थिक न्यायापासून राजा ढळला. तर संदेष्टे त्याला आपल्या प्रभावी वाणीने नि परखड अशा स्पष्ट संदेशांनी जेरीस आणीत. आपल्या गरीबाप्रत योजनेच्या पूर्तीसाठी तारणाच्या सिद्धतेसाठी राजकीय मुक्तीसाठी परमेश्वर इस्त्रायला बाहेरील विदेशी राजांचाही उपयोग करून घेऊ शकतो. असा संदेश यशयाने दिला आहे. (यशया: ४५: १-६) म्हणजेच यांचा अर्थ प्रभूच्या सेवकाने गरीबांसाठी गावच्या परिघावर, सरहद्दीवर, गावकुसाबाहेर, \*जगी ज्यांचे कुणी नाही. अशा पर्यंत पोहचायला हवे. जायला हवे.

नव्या कराराचा संदेशही जुन्या कराराहून वेगळा नाही. स्वताच्या प्राणांची पर्वा न करता हेरोद राजाच्या संदर्भात " त्या खेकडाला जाऊन सांगा" असे म्हणण्याचे धैर्य येशू पाशी होते. अनेक संत नि पोप संदेष्ट्यापाशी होते. अलीकडे ते दीन नि दलीत आदिवासी गरीबांच्या न्यायासाठी लढणाऱ्या जेज्वीट \*संदेष्टे फादर स्टॅन स्वामींकडे होते.

म्हणूनच धार्मिकता म्हणजे केवळ कर्मकांड वा अमूर्त कल्पना नव्हे. तिचे मूर्त स्वरूप राजकीय, सामाजिक व आर्थिक न्यायातच पहायला मिळते. अशी येशूची शिकवण होती. जी भूमिका आज पोप चौदावे लिओ आपल्या परिपत्रकात गरीबांच्या बाजूने मांडतात.

आपल्या पहिल्याच उपदेशात येशूने सांगितले, " प्रभूचा आत्मा मजवर आला आहे. कारण दीनास सुवार्ता सांगण्यास त्याने मला अभिषेक केला. धरून नेलेल्यांची सुटका व आंधळ्यांना तसेच धर्मांधांना नवदृष्टी हे विदित करावयास, ठेचलेल्यास मोकळे करावयास, परमेश्वराच्या प्रसादाचे कृपेचे वर्ष घोषविण्यास त्याने मला पाठविले आहे.

(लूक:४: १८-१९) येशूने आपल्या शिष्यांनाही सांगितले, लोकांना अन्न पुरवीणे म्हणजेच जीवनावश्यक गरजा पुरवीणे ही त्यांची जबाबदारी आहे. ( मत्तय: १४:१६).

ह्या येशूच्या मुक्तीच्या ईशज्ञानावर आधारीत पोप चौदावे लिओ महाशयांचे हे परिपत्रक आहे. जे गरीबांची बाजू घेण्यास जगभरच्या पुरोहितांना, सामान्यजनाना आवाहन करीत आहे. चला तर आपण सर्वच मिळून ह्या आवाहनाला साथ देऊया.

## सर्व आत्म्यांचा स्मृतीदिन!! (All Souls' Day)

२ नोव्हेंबर हा दिवस ख्रिस्ती धर्मातील अतिशय महत्त्वाचा दिवस आहे. या दिवशी स्वर्गप्राप्त न झालेल्या, पण देवाच्या कृपेची नि मुक्तीची वाट पाहत असलेल्या सर्व आत्म्यांसाठी चर्चमध्ये प्रार्थना केली जाते. चर्च दफनभूमी फुले, मेणबत्तीच्या प्रकाशांत सजवली जाते. समाधीवरील प्रियजनांच्या श्रद्धावंताच्या ह्या अश्रुंची नंतर फुले होतात.

सर्व आत्म्यांचा स्मृतीदिन (All Souls' Day) हा सर्व संतांच्या सणानंतर (१ नोव्हेंबर) नंतर दुसऱ्या दिवशी प्रार्थनेत साजरा केला जातो. हा पवित्र शुभदिवस आपल्या आधी निधन पावलेल्या आपल्या प्रियजनांच्या आत्म्यांसाठी प्रार्थना करण्यासाठी समर्पित केला जातो. या दिवशी चर्चमध्ये विशेष पवित्र मिस्सा (Mass) अर्पण केली जाते आणि कब्रस्तानात (cemetery) जाऊन मेणबत्त्या, फुले ठेवली जातात. उद्देश असा की, त्या आत्म्यांना देवाजवळ शांती आणि प्रकाशाने अनंत जीवन उजळून निघावे. स्वर्गात सात्विक, सुंदर, सुगंधी शाश्वत जीवन मिळावे.

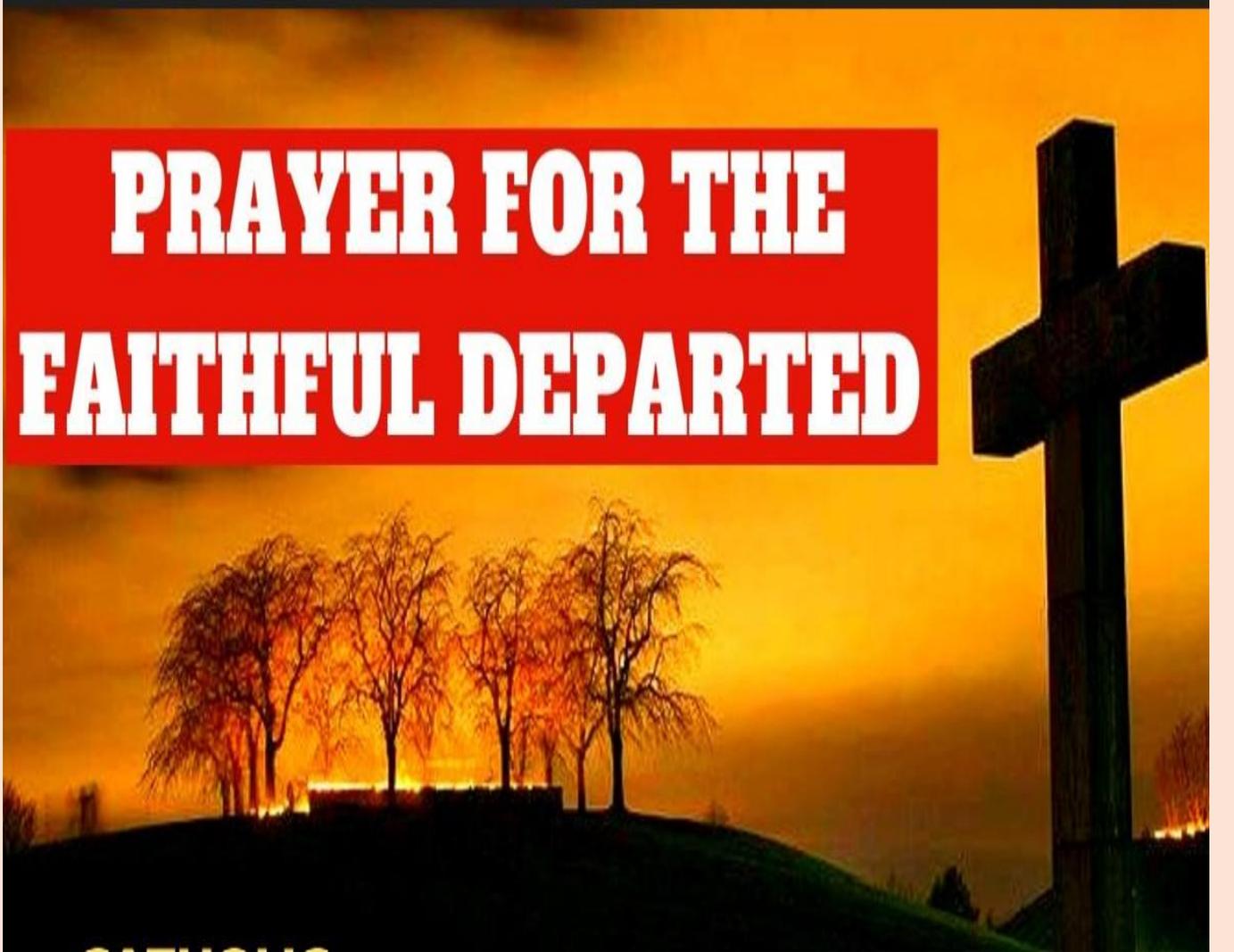
या दिवसाची परंपरा ११व्या शतकात फ्रान्समधील क्लुनी मठात (Cluny Abbey) सुरू झाली. तेथील संत अॅबॉट ओडिलो (Abbot Odilo) या सृजनशील आध्यप्रवर्तकाने दोन नोव्हेंबर हा दिवस सर्व आत्म्यांच्या स्मृतीसाठी राखून ठेवला. नंतर ही प्रथा संपूर्ण कॅथोलिक चर्चमध्ये रूढ झाली. या दिवशी प्रार्थना आणि मृत आत्म्यांसाठी मिस्सा अर्पण केली जाते. त्यावेळी उपासना वेदीवर काही ठिकाणी पुनरुत्थित ख्रिस्ताचे प्रतिक म्हणून पास्काची मेणबत्ती (Easter Candel) प्रज्वलित केली जाते. मरण म्हणजे शेवट नसून नवजीवनाची पहाट आहे. ह्या श्रद्धेने.

पृथ्वीवरील ऐहिक जीवन नि स्वर्गातील शाश्वत जीवन ह्यांचे वर्णन करताना..... संत पॉल म्हणतो. "...कारण आम्हाला ठाऊक आहे की आमचे पृथ्वीवरील मंडपरुपी गृह मोडून टाकण्यात आले तर देवाने आम्हासाठी सिद्ध करून ठेवलेले आमचे निवासस्थान स्वर्गात आहे. ते हातांनी बांधलेले गृह नसून सार्वकालिक आहे. ह्या गृहात असताना आम्ही स्वर्गीय गृहरूप वस्त्र परिधान करण्याच्या उत्कंठेने कण्हतो. आम्ही अशाप्रकारे वस्त्र परिधान केलेले असलो म्हणजे आम्ही उघडे सापडणार नाही. कारण जे आम्ही ह्या मंडपात आहो ते आम्ही भाराक्रांत होऊन कण्हतो. वस्त्र काढून टाकावे अशी आमची इच्छा आहे असे नाही. तर ते परिधान करावे अशी इच्छा बाळगतो. ह्यासाठी की जे मर्त्य आहे ते जीवनाच्या योगे ग्रासले जावे. ज्याने आम्हाला ह्याकरिताच सिद्ध केले तो देव आहे...\*याने आपला आत्मा आम्हाला विसार म्हणून दिला आहे... (२करिंथ ५: १-५)

तसेच तो मेला असला तरी शेवटच्या दिवशी उठेल. ह्याच विश्वासाने कुटुंबीय आणि प्रियजन आपल्या प्रिय व्यक्तींच्या स्मृती कबरींवर, पूण्य समाधीवर जगाचा सुगंधी प्रकाश म्हणून दरवळती सुगंधी फुले व मेणबत्त्या प्रज्वलीत करतात. आपल्या मृत नातेवाईकांची आठवण नि स्मरण जागवतात. ध्यान व त्यांच्यासाठी देवाकडे दया मागितली जाते. काही भाविक या दिवशी गरीबांसाठी अन्न, वस्त्र, निवारा, औषधे देतात दानधर्म करतात. स्मृती सभा आयोजित करतात. — आत्म्यांच्या शांतीसाठी पुण्य लाभावे म्हणून त्यांची दयाधर्म, सत्कृत्ये आठवतात.

हा दिवस आपल्याला मृत्यू हा शेवट नसून देवाजवळील नव्या जीवनाची सुरुवात आहे, पहाट आहे. हे स्मरण करून देतो. तसेच, आपल्या जीवनात प्रेम, दया, क्षमा शांती आणि प्रार्थनेचे महत्त्व अधोरेखित करतात.

साधारणता प्रियजनांच्या ताटातुटीचे आणि विरहाचे दुःख खूप मोठे आहे. आणि मृत्यू म्हणजे तर चिरवियोगच. तरीही ख्रिस्ती माणूस मरणाकडे सकारात्मक दृष्टिकोनातून पहातो. कारण कुसावरील येशू त्याचा आदर्श असतो. कारण येशूने मरणाची भीती त्यांच्या \*जीवन, दुःख सहन, मरण व पुनरुत्थानाने \*मरणावर विजय मिळवून घालवून टाकली. येशूकडून प्रेरणा घेऊन अनेक संतांनी महात्म्यांनी मानवतेसाठी मृत्यूला कवटाळले आहे. परार्था प्राण दिला आहे.



म्हणूनच ख्रिस्ती लोकांसाठी जगणं हे पेरणं असते. आणि मरणं म्हणजे उगवणे असते. \*जे पेरलं जातं ते मृत्यूनंतर उगवले जाते हा ख्रिस्ती लोकांचा विश्वास असतो. म्हणून तो आपल्या दिवंगत प्रियजनाची आठवण जगतो. त्यांची मूल्ये आत्मसात करून तसे जीवन जगत रहातो.

आज आपण आपल्या मृत प्रियजनांचे चिंतन करीत असता.... त्यांनी त्यांच्या जीवन कष्ट, दुःख सहन आणि मरणाद्वारे आपली श्रद्धा दृढ केली. चांगले संस्कार दिले. चांगल्या विचारांचा अनमोल वारसा मागे ठेवून ते गेले आहेत. जे आपण आज जगत आहोत. म्हणजेच तेच आपल्या रूपात आपल्या घटात आज जगत आहेत. म्हणून ते देहाने जरी मेले. त्यांच्या घटांचे जरी विघटन झाले तरी सुसंस्कारात नि श्रद्धेत आज ते जिवंत आहेत. हा सकारात्मक विचार घेऊन आपण हा स्मृतीदिन साजरा करतो. आजच्या शुभदिनी कब्रस्तानात जाऊन त्यांच्या समाधीवर आपण त्यांच्या स्मृती जागवूया.

## रोमचे लॅटरन महामंदिर!! अन्वयार्थ

संत योहानचे लॅटरन महामंदिर हे ख्रिस्ती धर्मातील सर्वात जुने आणि प्रमुख चर्च आहे. हे रोम, इटलीमध्ये लॅटरन भागात स्थित आहे. या चर्चला “सर्व चर्चची आई आणि चर्चची प्रमुख माता” असेही म्हटले जाते. या उत्सवामागील आपण अन्वयार्थ शोधूया.

हे महामंदिर पोप यांचे अधिकृत कॅथेड्रल (कॅथिड्रल) म्हणजेच पोपचे आसन स्थान आहे. कारण पोप हे रोमचे बिशपही असतात. सम्राट कॉन्स्टंटाईन द ग्रेट यांनी इ.स. ३२४ मध्ये हे बांधले. नंतर आग आणि भूकंपामुळे हे अनेकदा नष्ट होऊन पुन्हा बांधले गेले. अलिकडील बांधकाम हे १८ व्या शतकातील आहे.

हे मंदिर येशू ख्रिस्त तारणहार, संत योहान बाप्टिस्ता आणि संत योहान सुवार्तिक यांना अर्पण करण्यात आले आहे. चर्चजवळील लॅटरन पॅलेस हा पोपचा पहिला राजवाडा होता. येथे पोपचे कॅथेड्रल आसन आहे, ज्यावरून पोपचे बिशप पद दर्शवले जाते. चर्चचे देव राज्य स्थापनेसाठीचे अनेक अधिकृत फतवे नि परिपत्रके तेथून जाहीर केले जातात. ह्या लॅटरन महामंदिराच्या समर्पणाचा उत्सव दिन ९ नोव्हेंबर रोजी साजरा केला जातो. हे मंदिर ख्रिस्ती जगासाठी श्रद्धेचे आणि ऐतिहासिक महत्त्वाचे असे पवित्र केंद्र आहे.

रोम मधील चार महामंदिरांपैकी संत योहानचे हे लॅटरन महामंदिर उच्चतम श्रेणीचे देखणे नि कलाकसूरीने युक्त आहे. ते रोमच्या धर्मप्राताचे महामंदिर आहे. या मंदिराला पवित्र तारकाचे वा योहान बाप्टिस्ताचे चर्च म्हणत. याच चर्चमध्ये पुरातन काळातील रोममध्ये सर्वांना बाप्टिस्मा देत. महासम्राट कॉन्स्टंटाईनच्या कालखंडात जरी हे भव्य मंदिर उभारले गेले तरी पोप सिल्वेस्टर यांनी ३२४ मध्ये त्यांचा समर्पण विधी केला होता.

यहुदी धर्माचे एकमेव मंदिर येरूसलेमेत होते. त्याचे शुद्धीकरण खुद्द \*प्रभू येशू ख्रिस्त करतो. आपले मंदिर आत्म्याचे मंदिर शुद्ध ठेवण्याचे त्यात संकेत दिले आहेत.

मंदिर शुद्ध करणे म्हणजे काय? तर भिंतीच्या पवित्र मंदिरात जशी बाजारपेठ भरली होती. आणि तेथील चौरंग येशूने उधळून टाकले होते. आणि ताकीद देऊन म्हटले होते. माझ्या पित्याचे मंदिर तुम्ही चोरांची गुहा बनविली आहे... इतर ठिकाणी प्रभू येशू म्हणतो, "ही मंदिरे मी उध्वस्त करीन आणि ती मी तीन दिवसांत पुन्हा उभारीन" म्हणजेच मरणानंतर तीन दिवसानंतरच्या पुनरुत्थित मूल्यांविषयी तो बोलतो.

प्रेम, दया, क्षमा, शांती, सेवा, स्वातंत्र्य, समता, बंधुता, एकता, न्याय ह्या समाज मंदिरातील मानवी मूल्यांविषयीच तो बोलतो. म्हणून येशूची कबर रिकामी नव्हती तर मानवी मूल्ये प्रसवणारी ती उघडी कबर होती.

ह्या कॅथेड्रल लॅटरन बेसेलिकामधून या महामंदिरातून ही मानवी मूल्ये प्रसवावी आणि जगभर ह्या मूल्यांचा प्रचार, प्रसार व्हावा म्हणून लॅटीन चर्च आग्रह धरीत आहे.

येशू जेव्हा मंदिराविषयी बोलतो. तेव्हा त्याला केवळ दगड माती नि भिंतीच्या देखण्या इमारती अभिप्रेत नसतात. हे येशूने त्याच्या जीवन, दुःख सहन, मरण आणि पुनरुत्थानाद्वारे जगाला दाखवून दिले आहे. मंदिर महामंदिर म्हणजे अंतर्बाह्य समाज बांधणे. देवाचे राज्य बांधणे हा अर्थ येशूला अभिप्रेत होता. परंतु भक्तांनी येशूच्या नावे मंदिरे बांधली नि पूजा अर्चा कर्मकांड सुरू केली. आणि अशा रीतीने येशूच्या प्रेम सत्याच्या मुख्य मूल्यांचा कूसवृक्ष शोभिवंत आकर्षक बांडगुळांनी शाकारून टाकला. नि मूल्ये विसरले.

अशा महामंदिराच्या कॅथेड्राच्या आसनावर बसलेले संत पिटर पासून ते आताचे चौदावे पोप लिओ पर्यंत येशूच्या या वारसदार पोपनी देव राज्य स्थापनेची घोषणा केली आहे. तशी मानवी मानवेतर लोक तारणासाठीची जन कल्याणासाठीची मूल्याधिष्ठित परिपत्रके फतवेही तेथून काढले आहेत.

अलिकडील दिवंगत पोप फ्रान्सिस आणि त्यांचे उत्तराधिकारी पोप चौदावे लिओ हे सातत्याने जगात शांती नांदावी. क्रूर युद्धे थांबावीत. देशादेशात शस्त्रसंधी व्हावी. म्हणून शांतीची महासमाजमंदिरे उभारत आहेत. जातीयता, धर्माधता, अंधश्रद्धा, भेदभाव ह्यावर आधारीत राज्यसत्ता नि धर्मसत्ताना खीळ बसावी म्हणून आदेश काढत आहेत. ते ह्याच महामंदिराच्या आसनावरून.

जगाला धोका आहे तो विश्वविध्वंसाचा. निसर्ग, सामाजिक, राजकीय, आर्थिक, आदि क्षेत्रातील प्रदुषणाने आज जगाला पुरते घेरले आहे. त्यातून जग मुक्त व्हावे. पुढील पिढीने मोकळा श्वास घ्यावा म्हणून धडपडत आहेत. अशा समाज मंदिराची आस धरणाऱ्या महामंदिराचा आज हा उत्सव आहे.

प्रत्येक पॅरीश धर्मग्राम ह्या रोम येथील ह्या लॅटरन महामंदिराच्या छोट्याशा आवृत्तीच आहेत. अशा धर्मग्रामातील धार्मिक आणि सामाजिक नेत्यांनी समाज बांधावा. हीच ख्रिस्ती धर्माची खरी ओळख आहे. आणि अशा बांधणीतून ऐक्याचे, सेवेचे एकच जागतिक महामंदिर उभे रहावे. हीच तर येशूची समाज महामंदिराविषयीची देव राज्याची कल्पना आहे.

महामारीत, आपत्तीत, संकटात, आजार आरोग्यात, सुखदुःखात, एकमेकांच्या सहाय्यास मानवजात एकत्र येते. सेवेत धावून जाते. हे आपण वेळोवेळी अनुभवतो. हे एकत्र येणेच माणुसकी नि मानवता जपणे आहे. म्हणजेच येशूला अभिप्रेत महामंदिर, लॅटरन चर्च आहे.

देह मंदिर, चित्त मंदिर, एक तेथे प्रार्थना  
सत्य सुंदर मंगलाची नित्य हो आराधना.  
भेद सारे मावळू द्या, वैर साऱ्या वासना.  
मानवाच्या एकतेची, पूर्ण होवो कल्पना.

वेन्सी डिमेलो.