

IJ MATTERS



Nashik India: Volume VII Issue 4– September 2026

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SHRINE HAPPENINGS IN SEPTEMBER 2025

The month of September is a month of feasts and celebrations. On 5th September we celebrate Teachers Day in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a revered philosopher, scholar, and the second President of India. When his students and friends wanted to celebrate his birthday, he suggested that the day be dedicated to recognizing the invaluable contributions of all teachers to society instead. Since 1962, this day has been observed nationwide to appreciate the vital role educators play in shaping the future of the nation.

On September 8, we celebrated the Nativity of our Blessed Mother Mary (see below the articles/poem). Many Churches in Nashik had the nine-day Novena in preparation for the feast. Click on the link to hear my homily <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whZiG44md4w>

On September 14, we celebrated the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, which is one of the twelve great feasts in the yearly Church cycle (see below the articles/poem). Click on the link to hear my homily <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTF19Wegrko>

On September 15, we celebrate the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows (see below the articles/poem) Click on the link to hear my homily <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQW1MwTDZ5M>

On September 25, was Anant Chaturdashi, which is the day on which the Ganesh idols are immersed.

On September 29, we celebrated the feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. The names of these angels reveal qualities of God. Michael means that there is no one like God. God alone is absolute. Gabriel means God is my strength and Raphael means God heals. (see below for an article and poem).

Frs Bosco, Vinay and Linus conducted a retreat for the laity from September 11-13, 2026. There were 20 Retreatants and all were extremely happy with the spiritual inputs and went home filled with God's grace.

Fr Errol went to the Fatima Sisters Generalate to conduct the second of five Retreats to the whole Congregation. There were 86 sisters, all of whom were touched in some way or other by God's gracious 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

September 2026

HOLY CROSS

The Holy Cross the Painful Cross
We all remember well
Had once held down the dying Christ
Who rose alive they tell

His story is now told again
When suffering and strife
Keeps battering the human race
That struggles hard for life

He stands with all who bear their cross
As he will always do
The world may flout its wealth and might
But yet the Cross holds true

Godfrey D'Lima

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The source for the story of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Protoevangelium of James, an apocryphal gospel written around 150 C.E. From it, we learn the names of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, as well as the tradition that the couple was childless until an angel appeared to Anna and told her that she would conceive.

The traditional date of the feast, September 8, falls exactly nine months after the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

The readings clearly indicate that the feast of the nativity of Mary is a preparation for the feast of the Nativity of Jesus. Mary is that open vessel who allowed God to work in her and so enabled God to bring to fruition through her Son Jesus, the salvation of the whole human race.

The text chosen for the feast is from the Gospel of Matthew and contains the Genealogy and the story of the birth of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus.

Jesus is, for Matthew, the Messiah who has descended from David, as foretold by the scriptures. God continues to act in human history, and that God acts now, in a decisive way, in the sending of God's Son. God is not simply a God in the heavens, but a God who is Emmanuel, God with us.

Matthew's genealogy consists of three parts. The first, which begins with Abraham, ends with the Davidic kingship. The second begins with David and ends with the deportation or exile to Babylon. The third begins with the exile and ends with the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Matthew calls attention to the number fourteen at the end of the genealogy and, though a variety of suggestions have been offered as to why he chose fourteen, the simplest explanation is that the numerical value of "David" in Hebrew (DWD) is fourteen (d, 4; w, 6; d, 4). By this symbolism, Matthew points out that the promised "son of David" (1:1), the Messiah, has come. And, if the third set of fourteen is short one member (to solve this problem some count Jechoniah twice), perhaps it suggests that, just as God cuts short the time of distress for the sake of his elect, so also, he mercifully shortens the period from the Exile to Jesus, the Messiah.

Unlike Luke's genealogy, which does not name a single woman, Matthew's genealogy mentions four women besides Mary. These are Tamar, Ruth, Rahab, and Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. Several reasons have been offered as to why Matthew mentioned these four women. Three of these reasons are widely accepted today: (a) there was something extraordinary about their union with their partners; (b) they showed initiative or played an important role in God's plan and so came to be considered as instruments of God's providence or of his Holy Spirit; and (c) all four women (except Mary) were Gentiles and Matthew wants to show that in God's plan of salvation, the Gentiles were included from the beginning.

Through this, Matthew probably wants to show that God wants all to be saved and that he uses the unexpected to triumph over human obstacles and that he intervenes on behalf of his planned Messiah. This combination of scandalous and irregular union, and divine intervention, explains Matthew's choice of the four women.

What are the points that Matthew makes in his genealogy and what does he want to achieve by it? Matthew clearly wants to show that Jesus is the fulfilment of all Israel's hopes. The story of Jesus is part of the story of God's constant saving acts throughout the history of Israel. God involves himself in the nitty-gritty of life. Despite the constant infidelity of Israel, God remained faithful and, in a definitive way, directed its history towards its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

Matthew is also interested in affirming that the plan of God has often been fulfilled in history in unanticipated and "irregular" ways, as was the case in the birth of Jesus from Mary, and that Matthew is interested in showing that God worked through irregular, even scandalous ways, and through women who took initiative, like Tamar and Ruth. Yet the main reason for Matthew's inclusion of these women corresponds to one of the Gospel's primary themes: the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of God from the beginning. All of the men in Jesus' genealogy are necessarily Jewish. But the four women mentioned, with the exception of Mary, are Gentiles, "outsiders," or considered to be such in Jewish tradition. Just as the following story shows Jesus to be the fulfilment of both Jewish and Gentile hopes, so also the genealogy shows that the Messiah comes from a Jewish line that already includes Gentiles.



By showing Jesus as descended from David, Matthew wants to explicate that Jesus is the royal heir to the throne. Jesus, however, through his life, cross, death and resurrection will redefine the meaning of Kingship as never before.

Finally, Matthew wants to stress that God is active constantly in history and involved in the lives of his people. He works not only miraculously but also ordinarily in human effort, pain, and struggle to bring people to the kingdom.

The genealogy is followed by the story of the birth of Jesus. Since Mary and Joseph were engaged, they were legally considered husband and wife. Thus, infidelity in this case would also be considered adultery. Their union could only be dissolved by divorce or death. Though Joseph is righteous or just, he decides not to go by the letter of the law and publicly disgrace Mary, but he chooses a quieter way of divorcing her. God, however, has other plans for both Joseph and Mary and intervenes in a dream. Joseph is addressed by the angel as “Son of David” reiterating, once again after the genealogy, the Davidic origin of Jesus. He is asked to take Mary as his wife and also informed that it is the Spirit’s action that is responsible for her pregnancy. He is told that he is to give the child the name “Jesus”. Jesus (Iesous) is the Greek form of “Joshua” which, whether in the long form yehosua, (“Yahweh is salvation”) or in one of the short forms, yesua, (“Yahweh saves”), identifies the son, in the womb of Mary, as the one who brings God’s promised eschatological salvation. The angel explains what the name means by referring to Ps 130:8. The name “Jesus” was a popular and common name in the first century. By the choice of such a name, Matthew shows that the Saviour receives a common human name, a sign that unites him with the human beings of this world rather than separating him from them.

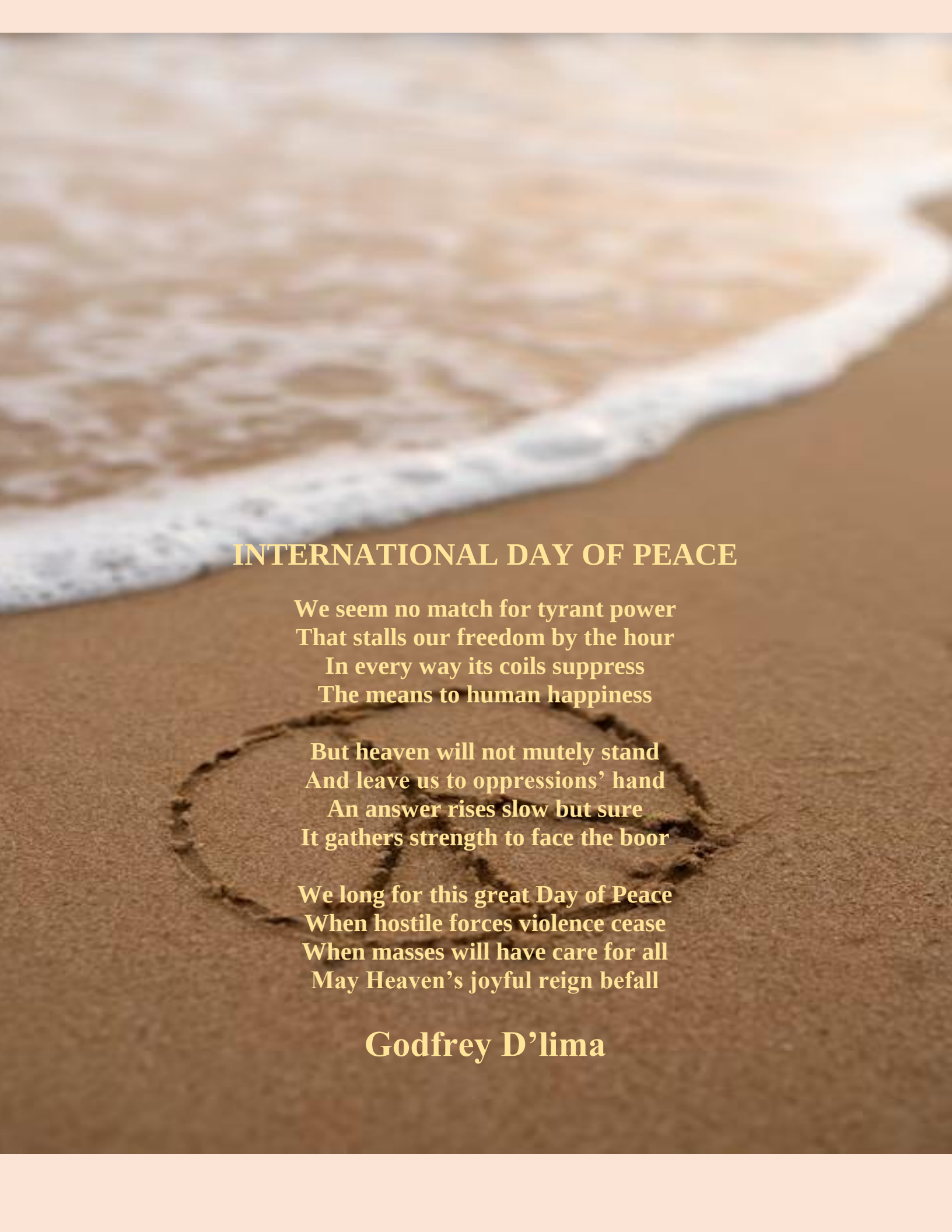
Matthew then inserts into the text the first of ten formula or fulfilment quotations that are found in his Gospel. This means that Matthew quotes a text from the Old Testament to show that it was fulfilled in the life and mission of Jesus. Here, the text is from Isa 7:14 which, in its original context, referred to the promise that Judah would be delivered from the threat of the Syro-Ephraimitic War before the child of a young woman, who was already pregnant, would reach the age of moral discernment. The child would be given a symbolic name, a short Hebrew sentence “God is with us” (Emmanu ‘el) corresponding to other symbolic names in the Isaiah story. Though this text was directed to Isaiah’s time, Matthew understands it as text about Jesus, and fulfilled perfectly in him, here in his birth and naming.

This birth narrative of Matthew invites us to reflect on a number of points. Of these, two are significant. First, many of us are often caught in the dilemma of doing the right thing which might not always be the loving thing. If we follow only the letter of the law, we may be doing the right thing but not the most loving thing. However, if we focus every time on the most loving thing, like Joseph, it is surely also the right thing. Though Joseph could have done the right thing and shamed Mary by publicly divorcing her, he decides to go beyond the letter of the law and do the loving thing, which in his case was also the right thing.

Second, the story also shows us who our God is. Our God is God with us. Our God is one who always takes the initiative, who always invites, and who always wants all of humanity to draw closer to him and to each other. This God does not come in power, might, and glory, but as a helpless child. As a child, God is vulnerable. He is fully human and, in his humanity, is subject

to all the limitations that humanity imposes on us. Yet, he will do even that, if only humans respond to the unconditional love that he shows. Mary has shown us how. Will we follow her example?

Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

We seem no match for tyrant power
That stalls our freedom by the hour
In every way its coils suppress
The means to human happiness

But heaven will not mutely stand
And leave us to oppressions' hand
An answer rises slow but sure
It gathers strength to face the boor

We long for this great Day of Peace
When hostile forces violence cease
When masses will have care for all
May Heaven's joyful reign befall

Godfrey D'lima

CONVERGING AT THE SUMMIT: THE SPIRITUAL PARADOX OF ST. THÉRÈSE AND ST. IGNATIUS

Many years ago, a scripture scholar mentioned St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Francis Xavier in the same breath. He was as amazed as he was delighted that both are pronounced as universal patrons of the missions. That this scholar, Fr. Errol Fernandes, S.J., could accept and champion Thérèse at this high level was for me a point of great joy. Too often in the past, those who did not understand her deeply tended to dismiss her approach as a form of sweetened spirituality; As the years rolled on, I found myself wondering if Thérèse, the young Carmelite who lived such a cloistered, sheltered life, and St. Ignatius of Loyola, the man, of the great outdoors and global apostolic vision, had anything in common at all. As I continued these reflections, my mind travelled back to a book I read decades ago: “My Vocation is Love” by Jean Lafrance. In it, the author presents a brief comparative study of Thérèse, Ignatius, and Francis of Assisi. Inspired by that text for this Feast Day of St. Thérèse, I have prepared this short essay to explore how these two seemingly opposite paths converge.

The spiritual roads taken by Thérèse and Ignatius were both unique to their individual styles in their respective eras. To a large extent their pathways were shaped by their personalities and the prevailing socio-economic and political milieu of their times. In a way, they were both cast in a mould that modern management would classify as a Blue Ocean strategy—creating entirely new, uncharted spiritual pathways. While they possess fundamentally different theological schools and psychological makeups, they culminate their journeys in a total, unconditional surrender to God made on the bedrock of Love.

Thérèse is imbued with a childlike surrender and her famous “Little Way”; of hidden yet filial confidence. Ignatius, a battle-scarred soldier and the founder of the Jesuits, is a person steeped in disciplined discernment, culminating in the radical detachment of his *Suscipe* prayer (Take, Lord, and receive). Where Ignatius offers a disciplined surrender of a fully formed will, Thérèse offers a helpless surrender of the heart, trusting that her very weakness draws God’s mercy down to her. Ultimately, both paths converge on the exact same summit: total abandonment to Love.

If they both had a common core in their surrender to the Lord, they sure did have very divergent paths in reaching the summit. Ignatius places this *suscipe* as a culmination of an arduous ascent having spent a great bit of time with the Spiritual Exercises. Some scholars suggest that this was part of the Contemplation to attain Love. This surrender comes after self disciplining, discretion and a kind of mastery over disordered attachments. Indeed this surrender is the classic soldier still in Ignatius with an achieved mastery of the self. This state of being for Ignatius was attained not by his own efforts but as he will say through the magnanimous Grace and Love of the Lord.

Therese on the other hand did it very, very differently. Hers was as she was wont to aspire something that most people should be able to achieve on the spiritual path. Her surrender did not come from an aggregation of strength but rather the humbling discovery of her own nothingness. In fact, Therese claims to be so Pauline when she states that she rejoices in her weakness. Lafrance vividly portrays this reversal through Therese's own image. She does not offer God a rough stairway which she would have to ascend one step at a time with great labour and dexterity. She smartly chose the image of the Lift/elevator the new invention then. She speaks of the confidence that will directly place her in the arms of God. Thus, we see that Ignatius goes on to place at the Lord's feet all that he has painstakingly built, Therese goes down a path with great boldness wherein she surrenders what she lacks. Therese identified with the image of a child with the confidence in a loving parent (God) who does not punish weakness.

In the *Suscipe* Ignatius writes "all is thine, dispose of it wholly according to thy will", in this he hands over it all to God to be used as the divine pleases. Therese, however, offers God her misery, her very poverty is what she hopes will bring God down to lower himself in mercy. In summary we can say Ignatius moved from strength to discipline to discernment to freedom to surrender in Love. Therese moves from Littleness to confidence to abandonment to surrender to Love.

Finally, these two mystics despite a common surrender go on to garner different fruits. For Ignatius the biggest prize was that of indifference. This inner freedom was indeed that marked him out when in the constitutions he mentions that he needed just a few minutes to recover his peace even if God had to or if the Society of Jesus had to be folded up. Therese's surrender had a different aim viz that of Confidence, in fact she writes "it is confidence and confidence alone that must lead to Love." Confidence is not about the calm indifference but a filial dive into the arms of Love. In fact, Lafrance suggests that the two are not opposed but remain complementary nuances of the same gift.

CONCLUSION: Jean Lafrance sure did not intend to pit the two mystics separated by approximately 300 years against each other. Rather he has given the modern reader a hard look at the Little Way which was surely no sentimental shortcut. It demands a rigour and discipline that Ignatius expects from those who follow the Spiritual Exercises. Finally, even as Ignatius surrenders from strength and Therese from weakness they eventually ask for the same thing "to be loved and to love in return." The title of the book by Lafrance embodies the commonality of the vocations of both these saints with the title MY VOCATION IS LOVE.



The author (Dr. (Fr) Conrad PesssoSJ) standing alongside the statue of St. Thérèse and her father, Louis Martin, in the garden of her former residence.

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

In ages when computers click
Creative effort makes one sick
And copying AI seems so slick
Whats left for literacy

To read and write may seem obscure
And something we must just endure
Such skills don't promise fate to cure
So why learn literacy

But for the poor that fill the earth
Their tools of learning are in dearth
There's nothing that can give self-worth
As noble literacy

For literacy resists the cheat
And for the poor that's quite a feat
And maybe life can turn more neat
When touched by literacy

So let the world more literate be
It will bring change that's plain to see
To read and write new history
The goal of literacy

Godfrey D'lima

LAITY RETREAT SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2026

In response to our invitation to join the Laity Retreat from September 11-13, 2026 at the Shrine of the Infant Jesus, 20 men and women registered for it. They came from Nashik, Mumbai, Vasai and Goa.

We began with an orientation at 9.00 PM on Friday, September 11, 2026. The participants were invited to give themselves completely to God by entering into the Retreat with total silence, both interiorly and exteriorly. This silence was to be maintained from the time of the orientation on September 11, 2026 night until the 12.00 noon Eucharist on September 13, 2026.

The two morning prayer sessions were conducted by Fr. Linus and one session on Saturday, September 12, 2026 from 3.30-4.30 PM by Fr. Vinay. I conducted a number of sessions, giving the retreatants practical tools for a life of prayer, including the 12 noon Eucharist and the Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.



On the second day of the Retreat, I conducted one more session on practical tools for personal prayer. After giving the retreatants time for personal prayer, I then gave them time to ask questions or seek clarifications. At the end of the Retreat, we had an evaluation.

The retreatants were very appreciative of the whole retreat programme as well as they were happy with the arrangements made for their board and lodge. Some even asked when the next Retreat was going to be held, so that they could ask their friends to join it.

The Retreat ended with the Eucharist at 12 noon on September 13, 2026 after which they had lunch and returned to their homes.



I thank Fr. Errol for giving me this opportunity to direct this Retreat and for all the help and guidance he gave me to plan the Retreat.

Fr. Bosco D'souza SJ
September, 2026

MEETING FRANCIS AGAIN, THROUGH CARLO CARRETTO



Around fifty years ago, during a period of searching for my own path forward, my sister Svetlana gave me a copy of Carlo Carretto's *Letters from the Desert*. At that time, my reading list fluctuated between George Orwell, Somerset Maugham, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, alongside books on law and finance. Yet, it was Carretto's words that gripped me; I returned to that book more than twenty times, finding myself renewed and deeply moved with every reading.

This initial encounter sparked a lifelong devotion. I collected every book Carretto ever wrote and closely followed his community's footprint in India. Last year, that fifty-year journey came full circle. While visiting Assisi with Svetlana and her family, we transitioned from a meditative time with St. Francis to visit Carretto's own final resting place in Spello, nestled in the Umbrian landscape. It was a deeply moving pilgrimage to the grave of a man who lived as a devoted follower of Francis, passing into eternity on

the saint's feast day: October 4, 1988.

Why bring you to this intersection of my personal journey and these two spiritual giants?

As we celebrate the 800th anniversary of the enduring wonder named Francis of Assisi, I want to invite readers in India to engage with him in a contemporary mould. To do that, no one serves as a better bridge than the mystic Carlo Carretto. In his fictionalized autobiography *I, Francis*, Carretto boldly adopts the first-person voice of the saint, instantly dismantling the romanticized caricature of a man who merely talks to birds. He presents Francis not as a medieval curiosity, but as a disruptive, living prophet whose radical embrace of the Gospel serves as a direct indictment of modern greed, urban consumerism, and spiritual complacency.

I offer you these reflections and excerpts from this profound work, hoping it will prompt you to read the book itself and better relish the true spirit of Saint Francis.

The Interior Desert: Radical Poverty and Naked Faith

In the book, Carretto's Francis insists that poverty was never a mere lifestyle choice or an exercise in philanthropy. As the saint reflects, "Poverty did not consist in helping the poor, it consisted in being poor." It was a necessary stripping away of the human ego to encounter God in absolute vulnerability. Carretto writes through the voice of Francis: "Poverty is not just a lack of things; it is a lack of self. It is the vacuum into which God can pour His love."

External lack is merely the beginning, for "true poverty went to the bottom of things, and touched the spirit." This perspective resonates deeply with the spiritual heritage of India, beautifully mirroring the ancient concept of *aparigraha* (non-possession) and the ascetic path of the *sannyasi*. Francis notes that "putting a little money aside, keeping a larder, buying a house" would have meant a devastating "lack of trust in my Lord." True spiritual wealth begins when physical ownership ends, shifting the soul from the "eros of easy things" to the profound "agape of heroes of the spirit."

Crucially, this path is not a platform for social activism or systemic restructuring. Francis clarifies that his "choice to be poor, then, was not a social or political choice, but a mystical one." He did not set out to organize a political pressure group or engage in standard class struggle. He recognized that while revolutions fight for the working classes, "nothing changed, because these people did not change hearts." For him, the Gospel was a call to look beyond temporal structures: "It is not enough to change laws. You have to change hearts."

For a reader navigating the hyper-materialistic, upwardly mobile realities of modern mega-cities like Mumbai or Bengaluru, Carretto's Francis offers a sharp wake-up call to look past "a life of easy pleasure." He models a journey that transcends all human constructs, civilizations, and conventions, reminding us that true liberation is found not in what we accumulate, but in what we have the courage to discard.

The Armor of Peace: Non-Violence and Unarmed Love

Just as Francis's radical poverty was a mystical surrender rather than a political statement, his response to a violent world bypassed the conventional logic of warfare and strategic defense. For a modern reader grappling with global strife or systemic conflict, Carretto's Francis offers a timeless pattern of deep, active non-violence. He did not wage war for justice, even when the suffering of the poor seemed to demand it. Instead, he introduced a method of combating injustice that relied on entirely different weapons: humility, presence, and unarmed love.

By stepping out onto the open road without a script or a shield, Francis showed that the only way to break the cycle of human violence is to absorb it rather than reflect it back. In a world defined by division, his life remains a radical blueprint for peace built from the inside out.

Rebuilding from Within: A Quiet Meditation on a Broken, Beloved Church

For Carretto, this deep interior stripping this radical detachment from worldly constructs was never meant to drive the believer away from the community. It was designed to anchor them deeply within it, even when that community is terribly flawed. The absolute vulnerability born in the desert of poverty becomes the precise tool needed to face the institutional Church.

"Repair it." When the Lord spoke these words to Francis from the crucifix at San Damiano, Francis first looked at the crumbling stone walls around him. It takes time for human hearts to understand the vastness of God's designs. Francis soon realized the call wasn't just to rebuild a small, quiet refuge in the woods, but to steady a great Church stretching across the earth "the one founded by Jesus himself who at Saint Damian had spoken to me, telling me straight out, 'Repair it.'"

For more than two thousand years, the gates of hell have targeted the Church, yet they have not prevailed. Yet, anyone who deeply loves the Church today knows the heavy grief of looking at its wounds, power dynamics, and the heavy burden of "shameless wealth" and "involvement with power politics." And yet, like Francis, we are called to stay, to love, and to labor with an enduring, quiet hope.

Writing with the hindsight of eight centuries, Carretto's Francis does not ignore the historical corruption or wealth of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He addresses the reality of having "seen no poverty in the halls of the Vatican." Yet, instead of advocating for a schism or walking away in bitter anger, Francis models an agonizing, fierce loyalty. He recognizes a profound debt, asking us directly: "Who would have handed down to us, across twenty centuries, the teachings of our dear Lord Jesus? Who would have encouraged us in the truth, reassured us in the path we had undertaken?"

This is the great mystery we live with: the Church is simultaneously holy and broken, divine and deeply human "at once indefectible by divine promise, and capable of scandalizing... by its riches and its might." When confronted with the flaws of our spiritual home, it is incredibly easy to become bitter, sour, and judgmental, quick to point the accusing finger at the festering sores of others.

But Francis heard a softer voice whisper in his spirit: "Judge not... I have come not to judge but to save." He realized that if he wanted to have any right to speak, he must have compassion. If we wish to heal the Church today, we must begin where Francis began: not with criticism, but with compassion. We reform the body of Christ by allowing Him to reform us, becoming simple instruments of grace from the very inside of the home He built for us.

It is here, in this tension, that we find the most poignant prayer of the modern pilgrim, reflecting Carretto's own deep theological struggles as a monk addressing the Church directly:

"How much I must criticize you, my church, and yet how much I love you! You have caused me more suffering than anyone else, and yet I owe you more than anyone else. I should like to see you destroyed, and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness. ... In a word, I cannot live outside of you, because outside of you I would no longer have my Christ."

Dr. Fr. Conrad Pessa s.j.

Director Xavier Institute of Communications

Chairman Xavier Institute of Management and Research

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

The Exaltation of the Cross is one of the twelve great feasts in the yearly Church cycle. Because the cross is at the heart and centre of all that we as Christians believe, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the triumph of the cross of Christ over the power of sin and death. And so, this feast provides us with another opportunity to reflect on the central mystery of our faith: that the one who was lifted up on the cross in crucifixion has triumphed over the power of sin and death because God highly exalted him.

This feast commemorates two historical events: first, the finding of what was considered the Cross of Christ in the year 326 by the mother of Constantine the Great, St Helen, and second its recovery from Persia in 628.

A story is told of Emperor Heraclius who in the year 628 after making peace with the Persians carried what was considered the Cross on which Jesus hung back to Jerusalem on his shoulders. He was clothed with costly garments and with ornaments of precious stones. But at the entrance to Mt. Calvary a strange incident occurred. Try as hard as he would, he could not go forward. Zacharias, the Bishop of Jerusalem, then said to the astonished monarch: "Consider, O Emperor, that with these triumphal ornaments you are far from resembling Jesus carrying His Cross." The Emperor then put on a penitential garb and continued the journey and carried the Cross into the Church of Holy Wisdom where it was triumphantly exalted. It was then resolved that the Fest of the Triumph or Exaltation of the Cross be celebrated by the Church in all parts of the world.



The Cross -- because of what it represents -- is the most potent and universal symbol of the Christian faith. It is a constant reminder -- and witness -- of Christ's ultimate triumph, His victory over sin and death through His suffering and dying on the Cross. The cross, once a tool of death, has become a means to life, an instrument of our salvation; it gives strength to resist temptation, it gives hope to seek new life and it dispels fear and darkness.

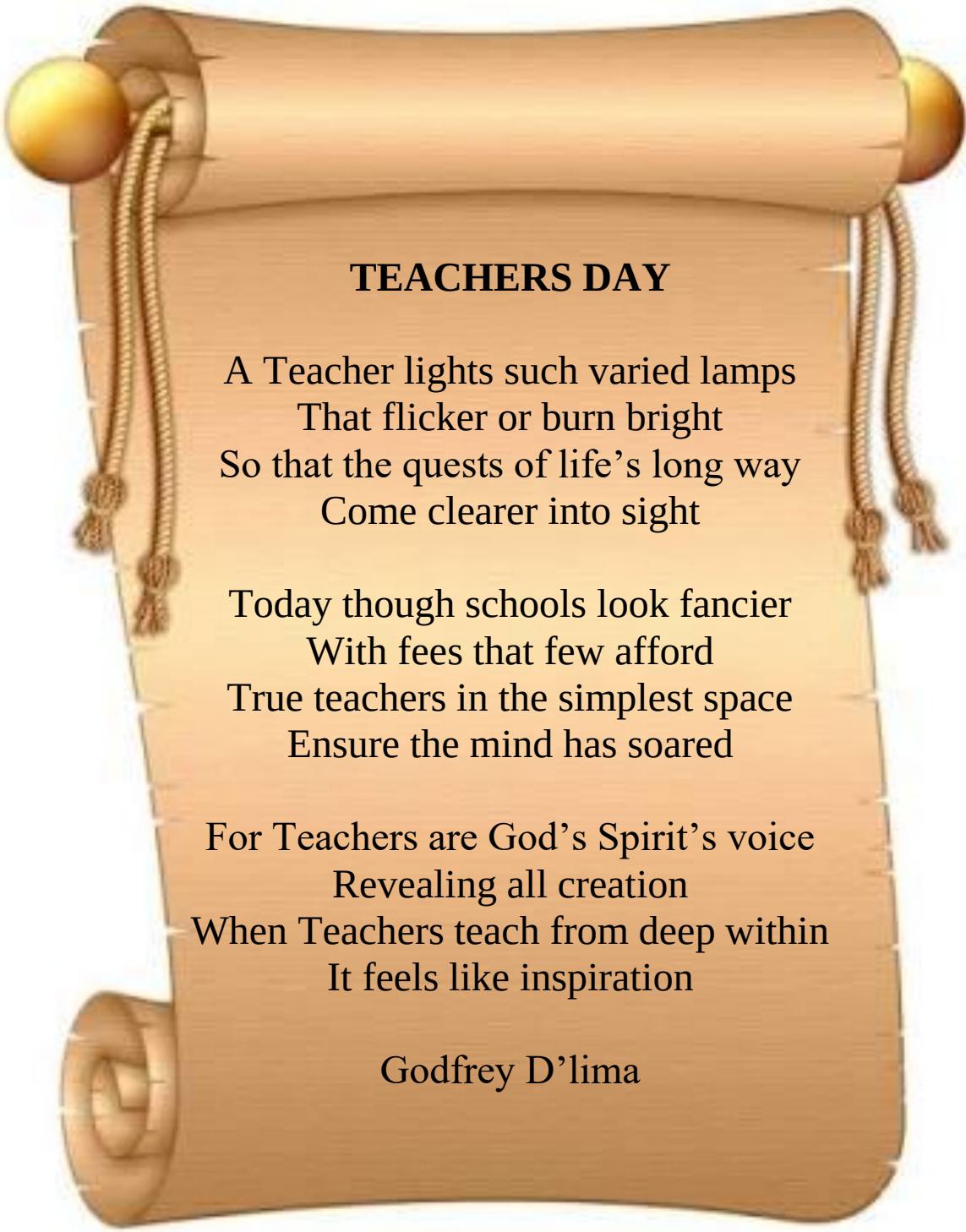
As Christians, we exalt the Cross of Christ as the instrument of our salvation. Adoration of the Cross is, thus, adoration of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who became Man, who suffered and died on the Cross for our redemption from sin and death. The cross represents the One Sacrifice by which Jesus, obedient even unto death, accomplished our salvation. The cross is a symbolic summary of the Passion, Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

In the first reading of today we read of how Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in order to heal and bring wholeness to a broken people. This was God's way of showing the people that He was primarily a God who wanted to save and redeem and not condemn and destroy. The Church and especially the evangelist John interpreted this lifting of the bronze serpent by Moses as a foreshadowing of the salvation through Jesus when He was lifted up on the Cross. The Triumph of the Cross is the Triumph of Jesus Christ whose love for us and obedience to his Father climaxed with his death on the cross. The deeper meaning of the Cross is presented in The Christological hymn in today's second reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians. Jesus emptied himself completely, not just becoming a human being but accepting the worst public death of the society he lived in to demonstrate the extent of the love of God for us. He died making a willing statement of love, filling the world with the love he had for his Father and his Father had for him. We are saved from the horrors of evil, from meaningless lives due to the love of the Lord. Because Jesus died on a cross for us we are able to proclaim to the world: Jesus is Lord. His love made this possible. When we venerate and adore the cross we are saying: Jesus is Lord of our lives.

To the world this act of surrender on the cross was an act of utter humiliation and subjugation and the height of folly. To the world this death on the cross was a wasted life. To the world this death on the cross was a sign of utter defeat. But what the world calls wisdom, God calls foolishness, and what the world calls strength God call weakness. Therefore, God highly exalted the crucified one by raising him from the dead. God gave Jesus his own name so that every creature on earth must now call Jesus "Lord." What human beings did, God contradicted. And so, in the weakness and foolishness of the cross we see the wisdom and power of God: Christ crucified. In him and his cross, surrender becomes power, waste becomes gain and death and defeat become victory and new life.

The cross is at the centre of our lives every time we face sickness and death. The cross is at the centre of our lives in frailty and old age. The cross is at the centre of our lives every time we feel utterly alone and abandoned. The Cross is at the centre of our lives every time we are tempted to give in and give up. It is at the centre of our lives every time we are tempted to throw our hands up in despair. It keeps reminding us that only when we embrace the cross in the midst of suffering and abandonment can we understand the power of the resurrection. Only when we have the courage to keep on keeping on can we like Christ become victorious and conquer. Only when we embrace the cross is it possible for God to raise us up and give us new life.

Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ

A scroll with a poem about Teachers Day. The scroll is unrolled, showing the text. It has a light brown, parchment-like texture. The top and bottom edges are rolled up. There are two golden-yellow spherical ornaments at the top, connected by a rope that hangs down on both sides. The text is centered on the scroll.

TEACHERS DAY

A Teacher lights such varied lamps
That flicker or burn bright
So that the quests of life's long way
Come clearer into sight

Today though schools look fancier
With fees that few afford
True teachers in the simplest space
Ensure the mind has soared

For Teachers are God's Spirit's voice
Revealing all creation
When Teachers teach from deep within
It feels like inspiration

Godfrey D'lima

शिक्षक दिनाचे महात्म्य नि औचित्य!! वेन्सी डिमेलो.

जन्मताच बाळ हे जिज्ञासू असते.

भिरभिरत्या नजरेने ते आसमंत न्याहाळत असते. हे बाळाच्या लाडिक नजरेच्या हालचालीतून आपण पाहतो आणि अनुभवतो. ह्याचाच अर्थ माणूस हा उपजतच शिक्षणाचा, ज्ञानाचा भुकेला नि जिज्ञासू असतो. त्याला बालपणीच मातेच्या मायेची जोड मिळाली की मग तो सर्वस्पर्शी घडत जातो....

माताही त्याला त्या बालअवस्थेत सात्विक संस्कारांची साथ देत रहाते. किंबहुना बाळ मातेच्या गर्भात असतानाच शिकत असते. त्यामुळे माता त्या गर्भार अवस्थेतही आपल्या बाळाशी बोलत असतात. आणि सात्विक जिज्ञासू बाळाला जन्म देतात. म्हणून सर्वप्रथम आई हा त्या बाळाचा पहिला शिक्षक असतो.

बाळ मोठे होते. शाळेत जाऊ लागते. तेथे शाळेत शिक्षक ही विद्यार्थ्यांच्या जीवनातील अत्यंत महत्त्वाची व्यक्ती असते. आई-वडिलांनंतर मुलांना योग्य मार्गदर्शन करणारे शिक्षकच असतात.

शिक्षक केवळ पुस्तकी ज्ञान देत नाहीत, तर विद्यार्थ्यांना चांगले संस्कार, शिस्त प्रामाणिकपणा, आत्मविश्वास आणि जीवनमूल्ये त्यात वक्तशीरपणा, नीटनेटकेपणा, श्रमप्रतिष्ठा, राष्ट्रभक्ती, स्वातंत्र्य, समता, बंधुता, एकता, न्याय, सर्वधर्मसहिष्णुता, राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता, वैज्ञानिक दृष्टीकोन, संवेदनशीलता, सौजन्यशीलता अभ्यासा व्यतिरिक्त ही जीवनमूल्येही शिक्षक शिकवतात.

ज्ञाना सोबतच विवेक, शहाणपण, आत्मविश्वास वाढवून योग्य निर्णय घेण्याची क्षमता देत राहतात. म्हणूनच शिक्षकांना समाजाचे शिल्पकार असे म्हटले जाते.

शिक्षकांच्या या अमूल्य योगदानाबद्दल कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करण्यासाठी भारतात म्हणूनच दरवर्षी ५ सप्टेंबर रोजी *शिक्षक दिन साजरा केला जातो.

५ सप्टेंबर हा दिवस भारताचे पहिले उपराष्ट्रपती आणि दुसरे राष्ट्रपती, महान तत्त्वज्ञ आणि शिक्षणतज्ज्ञ डॉ. सर्वपल्ली राधाकृष्णन यांच्या जन्मदिवसानिमित्त शिक्षक दिन म्हणून साजरा केला जातो.

डॉ. राधाकृष्णन यांना शिक्षण क्षेत्राबद्दल विशेष प्रेम आणि आदर होता. ते स्वतः एक आदर्श शिक्षक होते. त्यांच्या विद्यार्थ्यांनी त्यांचा वाढदिवस साजरा करण्याची इच्छा व्यक्त केली असता, त्यांनी स्वतःचा वाढदिवस साजरा करण्याऐवजी तो दिवस शिक्षक दिन म्हणून साजरा करावा, अशी इच्छा व्यक्त केली.

तेव्हापासून भारतात ५ सप्टेंबर हा दिवस शिक्षक दिन म्हणून साजरा केला जातो.

शिक्षक विद्यार्थ्यांच्या आयुष्यात मार्गदर्शकाची भूमिका बजावतात. विद्यार्थ्यांना कोणतेही यश मिळवण्यासाठी योग्य दिशा, सातत्याने प्रयत्न करण्याची प्रेरणा आणि चुका सुधारण्याची संधी आवश्यक असते. हे सर्व शिक्षक विद्यार्थ्यांना देतात.

एखादा विद्यार्थी अभ्यासात मागे असेल, तर शिक्षक त्याला प्रोत्साहन देतात. विद्यार्थ्यांच्या कलागुणांना वाव देऊन त्यांच्यातील सुप्त क्षमता ओळखण्याचे कामही शिक्षक करतात.

शिक्षक दिनाच्या दिवशी शाळा आणि महाविद्यालयांमध्ये विविध कार्यक्रमांचे आयोजन केले जाते. विद्यार्थी आपल्या शिक्षकाना शुभेच्छा देतात. त्यांच्यासाठी भाषणे, कौतुके, कविता, गाणी आणि सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम आयोजित करतात. अनेक शाळांमध्ये विद्यार्थी शिक्षकांची भूमिका पार पाडतात.

त्यामुळे त्यांना शिक्षकांचे कार्य आणि जबाबदाऱ्या जवळून समजतात. या दिवशी शिक्षकांचा सत्कार करून त्यांच्या पाचारणातील योगदानाबद्दल कृतज्ञता व्यक्त केली जाते.

आजच्या आधुनिक युगात शिक्षणाचे स्वरूप बदलत आहे. इंटरनेट संगणक आणि विविध तंत्रज्ञानामुळे माहिती मिळवणे सोपे झाले आहे. आतातर AI

मुळे सर्व क्षेत्रात शिक्षण ज्ञान उपलब्ध झाले आहे. तरीही शिक्षकांचे महत्त्व कमी झालेले नाही. माहिती मिळवणे सोपे असले तरी त्या माहितीचा योग्य उपयोग वापर कसा करायचा ह्यासाठी शहाणपण नि संस्कार लागतात. तो विवेक शिक्षक देतात. चांगला माणूस चांगला नागरिक कसे बनायचे? ह्याचे बाळकडू शिक्षक पाजतात. त्यामुळे शिक्षक हा विद्यार्थ्यांच्या जीवनातील दिशादर्शक दीपस्तंभ आहे.

शेवटी शिक्षकदिन हा केवळ एक उत्सव वा सोहळा नसून शिक्षकाप्रती

आदरभाव आणि कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करण्याचा दिवस आहे. शिक्षकांनी दिलेले ज्ञान शहाणपण विवेक संस्कार आणि मार्गदर्शन यांची जाणीव प्रत्येक विद्यार्थ्याने ठेवली पाहिजे. शिक्षकांचा आदर करणे त्यांच्या शिकवणूकीचे पालन करणे आणि जीवनात चांगले कार्य करून त्यांना अभिमान वाटेल असे वागणे हीच त्यांच्यासाठी खरी गुरुदक्षिणा आहे. म्हणून शिक्षक दिनाचे आपल्या जीवनात आणि समाजात अनन्यसाधारण महत्त्व आहे.

अनुभव आणि वाढ हा मनुष्याचा सर्वोत्तम गुरू आणि शिक्षक आहे. आपल्या प्रत्येकात तो गुरू दडलेला आहे. म्हणून आपल्यातील त्या शिक्षकाचे ऐकणे त्यांची जाणीव असणे हेही तितकेच महत्त्वाचे आहे.

मुलांचे हात, पाय, डोळे, कान हेच त्यांचे खरे शिक्षक होत असे जगप्रसिद्ध *शिक्षणमहर्षी रुसो म्हणत असत.

शिक्षणास शुद्ध चारित्र्याची बैठक हवी

शिक्षणाला सत्यनिष्ठतेचा व शुद्धतेचा भरभक्कम आधार हवा. विद्यार्थ्यांच्या जीवनात व्यक्तिगत शुद्धता, समाज सुधारणा पावित्र्य ह्यांची जोपासना जो शिक्षक करतो त्या शिक्षकांचा समाज आदर करतो. देशात आणि पूर्ण जगात सर्वस्पर्शी सर्व मूल्याधिष्ठित बलशाली शिक्षक घडोत ह्याच ह्या पवित्र दिनी सर्व शिक्षकांना शुभेच्छा....

आदर्श शिक्षिका: मदर तेरेसा!! मीना बनसोडे.

आज पाच सप्टेंबर जागतिक शिक्षक दिन. जीवन घडविणाऱ्या शिक्षकांचा गौरव नि कौतुक करण्याचा आजचा हा दिवस.

शिक्षक कसा असावा? ह्याचे उत्तम उदाहरण म्हणजे मदर तेरेसा. भूगोल हा त्यांचा विषय. हा विषय त्या इतक्या तन्मयतेने शिकवत की सारे जग मुलांसमोर एखाद्या चित्रपटासारखे त्या उभे करीत.

मदर तेरेसा ह्या एक आदर्श शिक्षिका होत्या. त्या कोलकत्त्यातील लॉरेटा कॉन्व्हेंटच्या सेन्ट मेरी हायस्कूलमध्ये भूगोल विषय शिकवित. त्यांच्या समोर धनिकांची सुटाबुटातील गळ्यात टाय, कॉलर बो बांधलेली शालेय ट्रेसकोड मधली गोजिरवाणी गुबगुबीत मुले बसलेली असत. मदरांच्या अंतरी नि अधरांवर त्या सतत....

"प्रभूची लेकरे सारी तयाला सर्व ही प्यारी...."

अशा आशयाचे गीत त्या सतत गुणगुणत असत. गरिबांविषयीची कणव कळवळा, पोटातील प्रेम त्या आपल्या रसाळ ओठात आणीत असत.

कॉन्व्हेंटच्या शेजारीच कुंपणाबाहेर प्रचंड दारिद्र्याने भरलेली झोपडपट्टी होती. तेथील इवली इवली. सदा फाटलेली. पोटे खलाटीला गेलेली मुले मदरांना खुणावत. ही सुद्धा देवाचीच लेकरे ना? हा प्रश्न त्या स्वताला विचारत. त्यावर चिंतन मनन करीत.

एक दिवस त्यांनी आपल्या मदर सुपेरियरला एक प्रस्ताव दिला. "संध्याकाळी शाळा सुटल्यावर आपण ह्या झोपडीतील मुलांसाठी त्यांच्या पालकांसाठी रात्रीचे साक्षर वर्ग घेऊ शकतो का?" वरिष्ठांनी मान्यता दिली. मदर "शाळेच्या जीवनातून जीवनाच्या शाळेत उतरल्या".

तेथील दारिद्र्य त्यांनी जवळून पाहिले.

जीवन जगण्याची त्यांची धडपड

पाहिली. एकवेळच्या जेवणासाठी

मोदात बालके पाहिली. मातेच्या

सुकलेल्या स्तनाला लुचणारी कृश बालके पाहिली. मदरांची जीवनाची शाळा सुरू झाली. त्या दररोज संध्याकाळी तेथे जाऊ लागल्या. झोपडीवजा पत्र्याच्या खोलीत त्यांचे वर्ग भरू लागले.

ज्ञान शहाणपण आणि त्यातून अन्न वस्त्र निवारा ही मिळवून देणे हा तर शिक्षणाचा खरा मूलभूत अर्थ. पण नेमका हाच अर्थ विसरून समाज स्वार्थात गुंतलेला मदरांच्या लक्षात आले.

आपल्या जीवनाची इतिकर्तव्यता काय? आपण जीवन कशासाठी नि कुणासाठी जगतो? जीवनाचे सार्थक काय? आदी प्रश्न त्यांना हैराण करीत. आपण सारी देवाची लेकरे मग हा मानव निर्मित अमीर गरीब भेदभाव का? कोण बरे गरिबांच्या ताटातील वाटा खात आहे. आदि प्रश्न त्यांना सतावत असत. गंभीर बनवतो असत.

त्यांनी भिंती पलिकडल्या जीवनाच्या शाळा उभारल्या. सारे जगच एक भलीमोठी पाठशाळा आहे. त्यातील सारा निसर्ग नि सृष्टी आपले शिक्षक आहेत. त्यांच्याकडून आपण शिकावे.

पक्षी समाजासाठी गातात. झाडे वेली आपली फुलेफळे लेवून लीन होऊन समाजापुढे झुकतात. देवाची सृष्टी घडवण्यात आणि राखण्यात साऱ्याच मानव नि मानवेतर सृजनाचा सहभाग आहे. ही मदरांची शिकवण होती. जल जमीन जंगल वृक्षवल्ली हवा अग्नी

आकाश अवकाश धरा खनिजे

सर्वांचाच मानवाच्या घडणीत सहभाग

सहयोग आहे. सर्वच आपले शिक्षक आहेत. हे मानवी जीवनाचे मदरांचे शिक्षकी तत्वज्ञान होते.

गरजवंतांच्या अंगणापर्यंत धाव घेणारी त्यांच्यात समतेची, ममतेची, न्यायाची, स्वातंत्र्याची, बंधुत्वाची, देवमूल्ये पेरणाऱ्या येशूची आई मदर मेरीला मदर तेरेसा आपल्या आदर्श शिक्षिका संबोधित असत. त्या गुणातून स्वतः घडून इतरांना घडवत असत.

मदर मरियाने येशूला सर्वांगिण सर्वस्पर्शी मानवतावादी असे घडवले. तो आदर्श जपून ख्रिस्ताच्या ह्या साऱ्या

लेकरांना शिकण्याचा हक्क आहे. तो प्रत्येकाला मिळाला पाहिजे. शिक्षणापासून कुणीही वंचित राहता नये. विस्तापितांसाठी... शिका, संघटीत व्हा आणि संघर्ष करा आपले कर्तव्य पार पाडा. तसेच स्त्री शिकली पाहिजे सज्ञान झाली पाहिजे. हा डॉ. भीमराव बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांचा नारा मदरांचाही होता. आपणही आज शिक्षकांचा सन्मान करीत असता हे व्रत स्वीकारू या.

अपार कष्ट आभार रहित असे मदर तेरेसा समिकरण तयार झाले. मदर तेरेसांचे त्यांना अभिप्रेत असलेले शिक्षण आणि अपरिमीत सेवेचे कार्य आपण पुढे नेऊया. कारण जीवनाची शाळा अनुभवणे हेच खरे आदर्श शिक्षण नि ते देणारे आदर्श शिक्षक नव्हेत का?

सौ. मीना बनसोडे.

क्रूसाला राजकारणाचं वावगं नाही.

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येशूचा धर्म म्हणजे
केवळ काही विशिष्ट
धर्मसिद्धांतांचा पुरस्कार
नाही.

तर त्याचा ख्रिस्ती धर्म
क्रुसाची एक जीवनपद्धती
आहे. काटेरी वाट आहे.
प्रत्येकाने आपला क्रुस
घेऊन मला अनुसरावे
असे त्याने म्हटले आहे.
म्हणून त्याला त्यागाचे
काटेरी मुकुटाचे
राजकारण वावगं नसावे.
आणि सत्तेला व्यवस्थेला
जो प्रश्न विचारतो.
त्याच्या अंगाखांद्यावर क्रूस हा
असणारच.
प्रसंगी परार्था प्राण देण्याचे
ते मग एकमेव साधनही होते.

येशूच्या शिकवणूकीनुसार
पूजाअर्चा कर्मकांड
हे जे त्यावेळी धर्मसिद्धान्त
मानले जायचे.
तसे कायदे नियमबद्ध हे
डाॅगमा नाहीत.
जे येशूच्या दुःखःमय
क्रुसावरील मृत्यूनंतर
चर्चमध्ये विधीवत
अस्तित्वात आले.
आणि आजही ते
कटाक्षाने पाळले जातात.
क्रुसाचा धर्म पर्यायाने
ख्रिस्ती धर्म खरे म्हटले
तर मानवी जीवनाच्या

सर्व अंगाशी व पैलूनी
संबंधित आहे.
संपूर्ण मानवी जीवनाविषयी
आस्था बाळगणारा हा
कृसाचा धर्म आहे.
माणसाच्या संपूर्ण जीवनावर
ह्या कृसाचा परिणाम
व्हायला हवा.
या संपूर्ण जीवनात
कौटुंबिक जीवन,
सामाजिक, राजकीय,
आर्थिक जीवन,
संस्कृती ह्या सर्वांचा समावेश
आहे.
म्हणून हा कूस केवळ वेदीवर,
अंगणात, गळ्यात न रहाता
तो व्यवस्थेला प्रश्न
विचारण्यासाठी हा कूस
आंदोलनात, मोर्चात,
असायला हवा.
सत्य काय आहे?
सत्य साक्षात सामोरे
उभे आहे.
हा संवाद शेवटी
येशूला कृसाकडे
घेऊन गेला.
कारण त्याने
सत्तेला व्यवस्थेला
प्रश्न विचारले.
हे आहे कृसाचे रहस्य.
HAPPY FEAST

Vency D'Mello sj

ती!!

पूत्र वियोगाने
ती हालली हळहळली
जरूर...
परंतु हिंमत नाही
हारली.
कबरेपासून घरापर्यंत
जाताना...
सांत्वने झेलत
ती ढसाढसा रडली.
नि लगेचच सावरली.
वेदनांच्या
दुःखी भावनांच्या
पायी श्रृंखला
असू देत
आसवे गाळावयास
मात्र आता वेळ नाही..
मी क्रांतीचे गीत गाईन...
असे समरगीत गात ती
आणिक जीवनभर
जोषात लढली.
अन्यायी व्यवस्थेविरुद्ध
झुंजली.
तिने तिच्या दुःखाचे कधी
भांडवल असे ते
केले नाही.
विनंतीमालेतील
विशेषणात
कृपाळू, ममताळू, मधूर
ती जरूर होती.
परंतु मर्दानी क्रांतीची
रुपेही तिथे तिने जीवनात
उभी केली. साकारली होती.
थोर शूर प्रेषित यहुदीयांच्या
भीतीने मरगळले गर्भगळीत
झाले होते.

पायातले बळच हरपले होते.
नि भीऊन लपले होते...
तेव्हा ह्या आणीबाणीच्या
काळात प्रसंगी
ती खंबीरपणे उभी होती.
पती वियोगाने
पुत्र चिरवियोगाने आज
अनेक माता गर्भगळीत
होतात.
जीवनभर काळोखात
जीवन कंटून स्वतःस
कोंडून घेतात.
कालौघात निघून जातात.
अशा वेळी ही येशू माता
पुत्राचा स्वर्गराज्याचा
अजंडा राबवीत
साहसाने भीरभीरत
फिरत होती.
हाय खाल्लेल्या
जीवनात हरलेल्या
हरवलेल्या
अशा दुःखी मातांना
ती उभारी यावी...
मरीयेचे हे धैर्य साहस
त्यांना लाभावे मिळावे म्हणून
हा सण अर्पित.
HAPPY FEAST

बाळ येशू तीर्थस्थान नासिक

आयोजित प्रार्थना शिबिर
फा. लिनस डिमेलो . 7387141830.



दि. 23 ,24 ,25 ऑक्टोबर 2026.

एसी बस रु 2300

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