IJ MATTERS



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SHRINE HAPPENINGS IN OCTOBER 2026

October begins with the feast of St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897). She was a Discalced Carmelite nun and known as the “Little Flower”, the Little Flower of Jesus, St Therese of the Child Jesus or the Holy Face. She lived for a mere 24 years on this earth and has left

such a lasting legacy, that she is regarded as a Doctor of the Church. Even through her short life, she teaches us many lessons for a fulfilled life. The first is that it is not the number of years that each of us lives that matters, but **HOW** we live each moment of the time given to us. Her relationship with God is summarised in this sentence, "I cannot fear a God who became so small for me. He is only love and mercy". For Therese, God was not someone to be feared but loved, because God first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). This love of God was a tangible love which manifested itself in her "Little way". This "way" was to do every act with love. It created her heaven here on earth, which enabled her to say "I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth". Many of us imagine that heaven is accessible only after death. Therese was able to bring heaven down to earth. This did not mean that her life was a bed of roses, it was quite the contrary. She had many health challenges and finally died after contracting tuberculosis. Yet, even as she faced these challenges, she could feel and experience God's mercy and love.

On the day following the memorial of St. Therese is the memorial of the Guardian Angels. These messengers of God are a reminder that God reveals himself not as a God who created the world and left it to its own design. Rather, our God is a God who intervenes when necessary through his angels who are messengers of Hope. The prayer to the Guardian Angeles is a simple, yet profound prayer. This is how the prayer goes:

"Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love directs **YOU** here. Ever this **day/noon/eve/night** be at my side, to guard and light, to **LOVE** and guide. Amen".

The bold font indicates the changes in the original prayer. The prayer begins by calling the angel of God. The word Angel from the Greek "Angellos" means "Messenger". Thus, the angel is a messenger of God. The understanding in tradition is that God has assigned each of us an angel. This angel is known as our "Guardian" angel. This shows the love, care and concern of God for each one of us, because every one of us is special and unique in the eyes of God. It is this love of God which directs the angel to me (The original reads "directs me here". However, the prayer is addressed to my guardian angel, and thus, God's love directs the angel to my side). The prayer may be said many times during the day. The times of the day represented by day/noon/eve/night are indicative of this. The prayer asks that I become aware of my guardian angel who guards me from all harm and lights my way. This means that my angel fills me with wisdom, discernment and right judgement to enable me to make the right choices/decisions. Because "rule' could communicate domination, I have substituted it with love. Finally, my guardian angel guides my words and actions all through the day. When I speak and when I act, my angel guides me to speak and act with words and actions that build up and enhance.

On October 4 each year, we celebrate the feast and life of an extraordinary Saint in Francis of Assisi. This year is special since we celebrate the 800th year of his death. At a time when we are struggling to cope with how to respond to environmental challenges, the feast of St. Francis Of Assisi (1181/1182 - 1226) comes as (literally) a breath of fresh air. St. Francis realised that the easiest way to see, feel and touch God was through all of God's creation. For him, the sun was a brother and the moon a sister. Animals and plants were friends who had to be nurtured and not feared. In his response to creation, Francis went back to the

origin as narrated in Genesis and God's command to the human race to live in harmony with the rest of creation (Gen 1:28-30).
We get so caught up today with wanting to have more that we might lose sight of the meaning of life itself. The desire to acquire more and more and be regarded as successful based on what we possess sometimes leads to missing out on so much that life has to offer. This then is the challenge that the feast of this extraordinary Saint offers us, namely that we learn to love and live with our environment. Today more than ever we need to go back to our origins and the response of St. Francis to creation if we are to save our world. It is indeed fitting that St. Francis is the patron of animals and environment. To listen to my Homily on St. Francis of Assisi click on the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=namWRXcBGo8

The memorial of our Lady of the Rosary, is celebrated on October 7 each year. It was formerly known as the Feast of Our Lady of Victory. Legend has it that Our Lady appeared to St. Dominic in 1208, and gave him the Rosary to be used as a tool against all kinds of challenges. Our Lady of the Rosary, also known as Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, is a title of the Blessed Virgin Mary in relation to the Rosary. The development of the Rosary as a form of prayer owes much to the followers of St. Dominic. On October 13, 1917, Our Lady of Fatima told the children, "I am the Lady of the Rosary".
This year, we had a special Rosary in the Shrine on that date on the invitation of Pope Leo XIV to pray for peace in our world.
When we think of or reflect on Mary, the phrase that comes to mind to describe her whole life is the one she used in her response to angel Gabriel, namely: "Let it be done to me according to your word". This communicates a "passive activity" or an active passivity". Mary will not assume or presume that it is she who would do. Rather she will cede the initiative to God. She will let God do in her. This was Mary's constant response to every situation in her life, especially when she could not understand why things were happening the way they were. Our Lady of the Rosary invites us to this same response.
To listen to my Homily on Our Lady of the Rosary, click on the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0eaRxF8CAc

The International day for Eradication of Poverty is celebrated every year on October 17. In this context, the first encyclical of Pope Leo XIV titled "Dilexit Te" (I have loved you) {I have prepared a summary of the encyclical} exhorts those of us who profess to be disciples of Jesus, to show our concern for the poor in action.
On October 18, we celebrate the feast of the Evangelist St. Luke. His Gospel is the longest of all the four Gospels. It is known as the Gospel of Prayer {Luke shows Jesus praying more times than the other Evangelists; the Gospel of Women {Luke specifically mentions that Jesus had women disciples; the Gospel of the Poor {In Luke's Sermon on the Plain it is the poor (not the poor in spirit) who are Blessed, the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus and of the rich fool are found only in the Gospel of Luke. {See my article on St Luke below}. To hear my article on the Feast of St. Luke click on the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQtOcN5euuM

Fr Errol is engaged in giving five Retreat to the whole congregation of the Fatima Sisters. The third was from Septemner 28-October 3, 2026



and the fourth from October 16-24, 2026. The Spirit of God was present throughout the retreats thanks to your prayers. The Fatima Sisters are doing wonderful work in many parts of India. They are engaged in Educational, Pastoral, Social and the work of healing through dispensaries, clinics and hospitals.



On the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7), we blessed the statue of Our Lady [which had been repainted]. Our Blessed Mother looks even more welcoming now. You may click on the link to watchy the blessing https://youtu.be/C187StroR9k?si=JNEkI0LEyWp1d5Df



From October 23-25, 2026 Frs Linus and Vinay gave a Retreat to 24 retreatants. Those who made the Retreat were moved by the serenity experienced in the campus, the talks by Frs Linus and Vinay and God's ever available 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

October 2026

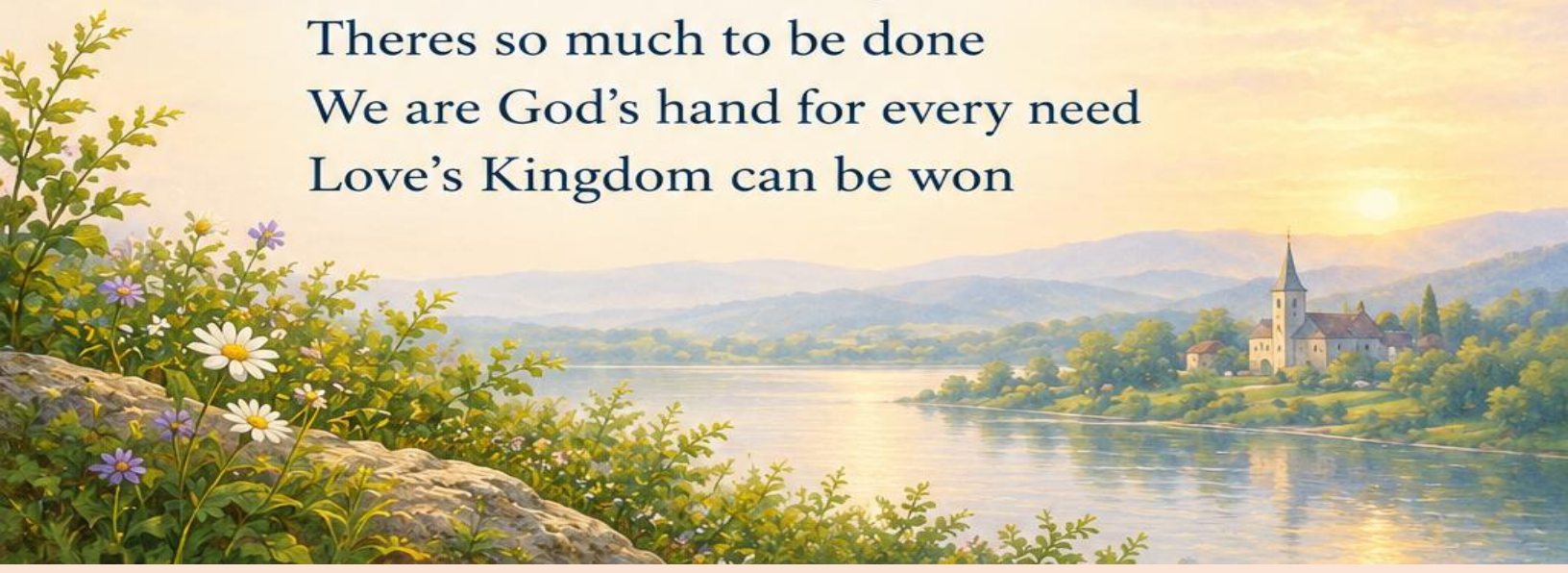
THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

I used to think of gilded wings
Sweet and gentle faces
Of angel forms that fly on high
Belonging to fair races

But now I know it cannot be
Those angels fair and golden
Are all that's there in heavens court
To whom we are beholden

For angels are just anywhere
The tints of God's own being
To carry on with heaven's tasks
Some plain to human seeing

We all are called to angel roles
Theres so much to be done
We are God's hand for every need
Love's Kingdom can be won



OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Of many lifelines that we know
That save when we are sinking
The Rosary has held us firm
With heaven keeps us linking

And when our lofty prayers don't serve
To bring us hope to stand
The simple Rosary brings to us
God's strong unfailing hand



WORLD FOOD DAY

— OCT. 16 —

We may not suffer hunger's pangs
We 've wined and dined quite well
We've grown in proper height and weight
As standard measures tell

But if we've lost the heart to feel
The hunger people suffer
With wages low and rare to earn
No source of life to buffer

Now let's recall the parable
That Jesus told of Dives
Who ate content and dropped his crumbs
That Lazarus just survives

Then death the leveller took both
And Lazarus reached Heaven
But Dives did burn for needs he'd spurn
When wealth his soul did deaden

For millions in our world still starve
While wars and feuds deprive
The wellbeing God intends for all
Is yet to come alive

So let us strive in every way
To reach the poor in need
Maybe to hold our feasting down
Their hungering to feed

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
ERADICATION OF POVERTY

OCT.17

No not one magic day can change
The scourge of poverty
But lifelong efforts wide in range
One day the poor will free

In education, skills for life
In farming close to nature
Eschewing every war and strife
And growing in human stature

All humankind today must rise
To heaven's call unfurled
Let none this vital call despise
To build a just new world



THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

The Gospel of Luke is generally regarded as the third of the four canonical Gospels. Almost all scholars agree that the author of Luke is also the author of the Acts of the Apostles.

The Gospel is known by many names. Some see it along with Acts as narrating the history of salvation, which is divided into three parts. This first is the time before Jesus where everything is old. This is possibly why Luke has changed Mark 8,28 which has "one of the prophets" as one of the answers of the people regarding Jesus' identity to "one of the old prophets" (9,19). The second is the time of Jesus who inaugurates the kingdom (4,16-30) and the third is the time of the Church (The Acts of the Apostles), which continues the work of Jesus.

Others see it as a Gospel of Prayer because when compared with Matthew and Mark, the Lucan Jesus prays oftener. There are seven accounts of Jesus praying that are exclusive to Luke. (3,21; 5,16; 6,12; 9,18; 9,29; 11,1; 22,32).

Still others see it as a Gospel of Women since Luke gives special importance to women in his Gospel. In Luke's Infancy narrative, Mary rather than Joseph is an important figure. Only in Luke do we find the miracles of the raising of the widow's son (7,11-15) and the healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (13,10-17). Luke alone tells us that Jesus had women disciples who provided for him out of their means (8,1-3).

Some also see Luke as the Gospel of Great Mercy or Pardon. This is because the Parables of the Good Samaritan (10,30-35) and the Prodigal Son (15,11-32) are found only in Luke. While hanging on the Cross, it is in Luke's Gospel alone that Jesus forgives those who crucified him (23,34).



The Gospel of Luke begins with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah followed by the announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary. Immediately after this announcement Mary goes to meet Elizabeth who will be the mother of John the Baptist in order to share the good news with her. Luke alone of all the Evangelists narrates an incident in the early life of Jesus after his birth where he is found in the Temple. Jesus begins his public ministry immediately after his Baptism and in the Synagogue at Nazareth

where he reads from Isaiah what may term as his own manifesto and plan of action. He chooses disciples to help in his mission, which he continues in Galilee.
A large part of the Gospel (9,51-19,27) has been termed as the Journey to Jerusalem during which Jesus both preaches and heals. After his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he cleanses the Temple but continues to teach in it even after this incident. During this time, he is questioned about his authority and other matters of the law and most of the questions are with a view to trap Jesus. It is one of the Twelve, Judas who betrays Jesus to the Jewish leaders. He is tried, and condemned to death on a cross where he dies forgiving those responsible for crucifying him.
The last part of the Gospel begins with an episode of the empty tomb in which the women who go to the tomb are asked why they look for the living among the dead. Jesus then appears to two disciples when they are on their way to Emmaus and chides them for their lack of faith. Finally, Jesus appears to the eleven, gives them a commission and then is taken up to heaven. The disciples return to the Temple in Jerusalem with great joy.

Some of the characteristics unique to Luke's Gospel are as under:

1. The Gospel of Luke is the only Gospel, which narrates the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, and his birth. The birth of Jesus is announced to Mary (not Joseph as in Matthew). Luke alone narrates the ascension of Jesus into heaven.
2. Only Luke narrates the incident of Jesus being found in the temple (2,41-52). This is the only incident from Jesus' childhood that any evangelist narrates.
3. Luke's genealogy of Jesus goes back to Adam the first human being (3,38) unlike Matthew's, which begins with Abraham. Luke alone gives us the age of Jesus when he began his ministry (3,23).
4. In Luke alone, we find the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee who went to the Temple to pray, the rich man and Lazarus, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich fool who would tear down his barns and build greater barns in order that he might store his goods, and the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree in order that he might see Jesus. Each of these parables and stories illustrates what Luke regards as an essential characteristic of Jesus' work.
5. Compared to the other canonical gospels, Luke devotes significantly more attention to women. The Gospel of Luke features more female characters, features a female prophet (2,36), and details the experience of pregnancy (1,41-42). Prominent discussion is given to the lives of Elizabeth and of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Ch. 2).
6. Luke portrays Jesus as extremely concerned about the poor and those who were considered social outcasts. Already in the Sermon on the Plain, the Lucan Jesus pronounces a blessing on "the poor" (6,20) unlike the Matthean Jesus whose blessing is pronounced on the "poor in spirit" (Mt 5,3). Three parables in Chapter 15 (the Lost sheep, the Lost coin and the Lost Son) are told one after another because the Pharisees and scribes complained about Jesus' table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners.

7. Luke mentions the Holy Spirit more than the other two synoptic gospels, Matthew and Mark. John the Baptist is filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born (1,15); next, John's mother Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit (1:41); before long, John's dumbstruck father Zechariah is also filled with the Holy Spirit (1,67). Jesus is conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (1,35). The Holy Spirit reveals to the aged Simeon that he will see the Messiah (Christ) before he dies (2,26-27). John the Baptist announces that the powerful one coming after him will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (3,16). When Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends on Him in bodily form as a dove (3,22), as God the Father confirms from heaven that Jesus is "My Son, whom I love". At this point Jesus is "full of the Holy Spirit" (4,1), and is "led out by the Spirit into the wilderness" (4:1), where the Devil tempted Him for forty days. Having successfully resisted the Devil as a man (4,4.8.12), Jesus returns to Galilee "in the power of the Spirit" (4,14). Luke uses all these references as a build-up to Jesus reading the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me" (4,18-19). 'The Anointed One' is 'the Messiah' in Hebrew, 'the Christ' in Greek. The total involvement of the Holy anointing Spirit at every step of the way (conception, babyhood, childhood, extended family, baptism, temptation and inauguration to ministry) proves that He, Jesus, is the Anointed One, the Messiah, and the Christ.

Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ

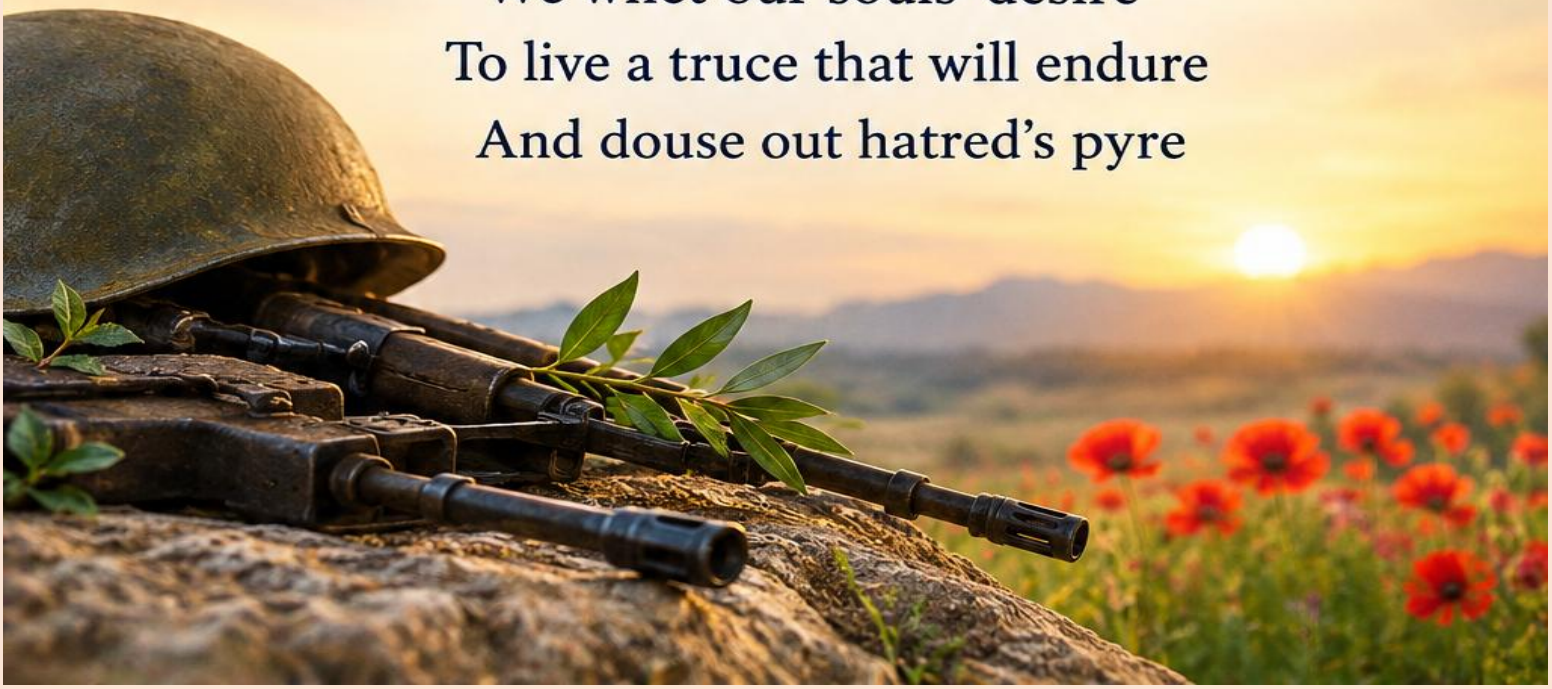
DISARMAMENT WEEK
OCT 23-30



It is a touching memory
Of bygone wars we know
When soldiers stopped their killing war
And brotherhood would flow

Disarmament however brief
Reminds us peace is near
If only we will heaven heed
And banish hate and fear

Then tasting peace for just a while
We whet our souls' desire
To live a truce that will endure
And douse out hatred's pyre



APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
DILEXI TE
OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV
TO ALL CHRISTIANS
ON LOVE FOR THE POOR

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1. “I HAVE LOVED YOU” (Rev 3:9). These words are addressed to the Church in Philadelphia which is the sixth of the seven Churches that are addressed. The powerless will be vindicated
2. The last Encyclical of Pope Francis was “He loved us [Rom 8:37} of October 24, 2024. In Rom 8:31-39, Paul is emphatic that nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God in Jesus. Jesus almost always identified himself with the poor and marginalized. As disciples of Jesus, we need to do likewise
3. We need to recognize Jesus in the poor and suffering

CHAPTER ONE
A FEW ESSENTIAL WORDS

4 It was pure, unadulterated love of the woman which resulted in her anointing Jesus. It is also likely that she had insight into what was to happen to Jesus. Jesus points this out when he says that she has prepared his body for burial [Mt 26:12]
5. Contact with the poor is fundamental to our finding the Lord today
Saint Francis
6. St. Francis of Assisi is an outstanding example of how to find God in the poor
7.We need to move from self-centeredness to other centeredness.
The cry of the poor
8.Proactiveness is required. If we do not act for the poor, we might be counted as their oppressors
9. Material poverty, social marginalization, moral, spiritual, cultural poverty and those who have no rights, no space or freedom are other kinds of poverty. We need to see the face of Christ on the wounded faces of humanity
10.The United Nations celebrates October 17 as the Day for Eradication of Poverty. This year, theme urges three shifts: (1) *From control to care*: Design services that start with trust. Reduce punitive conditionalities, streamline documentation, and prioritize respectful, person-centred interactions. (2) *From surveillance to support:* Rebalance investments away from monitoring and removal toward family-strengthening services: income support, quality childcare, adequate housing, mental health care, parenting support, and access to justice. (3) *From top-down to co-created solutions:* Involve families living in poverty at every stage—assessment, design, budgeting, delivery, and evaluation—so policies reflect real needs and constraints.
11. Over 690 million people live in extreme income poverty (under Rs. 170 per day), and nearly half the world lives below Rs. 550 per day, leaving many just one shock away from hardship. The parable of the rich man and In Lk 16:19-31 is relevant even today
12.Poverty is spreading so that even in the “So called” wealthy countries of the world, the number of those families who cannot make it to the end of the month is growing. Women are particularly affected when they are excluded, mistreated and are victims of violence. In the condemnation of the religious leaders of his time, Jesus says that there is a dichotomy between their words and actions. “…. therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practise what they teach.” [Mt 23:3]
Ideological prejudices

13. We must distinguish between growth and integral human development. While wealth has certainly increased, inequality has increased at a higher rate. The consequence is that those who had a lot, have more now and those who had little have even littler now
14.We need to accept responsibility for the poor. We must avoid generalizations about the reasons for their condition. We must not write them off. We are the keepers of our brothers and sisters [Gen 4:9]
15.Charitable works are one way of responding to the poor and their situations

CHAPTER TWO
GOD CHOOSES THE POOR

The choice of the poor

16.Phil 2:5-11, summarizes the initiative and action of God in sending Jesus. It encapsulates the Incarnation, Ministry and the death and resurrection of Jesus. In our "option for the poor" we do not exclude anyone. However, we clearly OPT for the poor
17All through scripture, God ism presented as caring for the poor in a special way

Jesus, the poor Messiah

18. Jesus was not born as a king, rich or privileged. He chose to be born of simple, ordinary people. This was a deliberate choice, which we are called to make
19.Jesus was born poor, lived a life of poverty and died as an outcast. He is truly the Messiah of and for the poor
20. The trade of Jesus, the offerings of his parents at his presentation and his invitation to those who wished to follow him, all speak of his life of poverty
21.Jesus' inaugural Discourse in the Synagogue at Nazareth summarises that his focus will be the poor. The good news that he brings is primarily for the poor [Lk 4:16-20]
22. Jesus makes it abundantly in many places in scripture, that poverty is not linked to personal sin
23.If we are truly disciples of Jesus, concern for the poor has to be an integral part of our profession of faith.

Mercy towards the poor in the Bible

24.Jesus summarises the whole Decalogue in two commandments, which are actually one. Love of God is manifested in love of the other [Mk 12:31]. John explicates this when he states that if a person cannot love a brother or sister and professes to love God, that person is a liar [1 Jn 4:20]
25.The Old Testament teaches respect and love for the other even if that other is an enemy
26. Love for the other must be tangible. It must be shown in deeds.
27. Our love for the other which shows in action, must come from within
28. We must avoid excuses and do what we HAVE to do for the poor
29. In his letter "to the twelve tribes in dispersion" [which indicates the whole Christian community wherever they are], James is explicit that a faith which does not show itself in action is dead [Jas 2:26]
30. The question that we need to keep asking ourselves daily is "How have I reached out to my brother/sister in need?
31. We must not dilute God's message

32. The Acts of the Apostles provides practical examples [Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37; 6:1-6] of caring for the poor and life in common
33. When we give to the poor we help ourselves
34. Christianity is not a theoretical religion, but one which shows faith in loving action towards the poor

CHAPTER THREE

A CHURCH FOR THE POOR

35. The Church must not only be a Church of the poor, but must also be SEEN to be a Church of the poor
36. Our faith is genuine when it shows in our actions to help the poor

The true riches of the Church

37.The giving of 1% of our earnings is instructive here. This exhortation states, that the amount we give is not as important as our wanting to give from the heart and because we want to give
38. Can we like Lawrence say that the true treasurers of the Church are the poor and marginalised?

The Fathers of the Church and the Poor

39. From the earliest of times, the Church saw herself and acted as a Church for and with the poor)
40. Faith, worship and social action are linked)

Saint John Chrysostom

41. Our altars cannot contain vessels of gold and silver while Jesus is out on the streets cold, naked and hungry)
42. Charity and true worship go hand in hand)

Saint Augustine

43. Lk 17:10 in which Jesus asks us to regard ourselves as servants makes us realise that we reach out to the poor not as a favour to them, but because they deserve it)
44. The Eucharistic Lord is present in the poor
45. We do not do the good we do because we expect the Lord to give us more in return. Rather we do what we do, BECAUSE the Lord has been gracious to us in so many ways)
46. Alms giving must flow from within
47. Christ lives in the poor
48. Doctrine which does not have mercy as an essential component is empty.

Care of the sick

49. Challenges like Covid-19 and other challenges which keep coming our way, reveal whether we are men and women of action or mere words
50. Peter summarizes the ministry of the Lord, in one sentence when he says “He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. [Acts 10:38}. Can we imitate the Lord in this regard?
51. Many religious congregations of women have reached out tangibly to the poor.
52. Salvation is here and now and must be communicated through our loving actions

Care of the poor in monastic life

53. We are called to be contemplatives in action. This action is concern for the poor

54. Our prayer leads to action which brings us back to prayer
55. Mt 26:40 “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”
56. Voluntary poverty is a path to freedom. We become part of those whom we serve.
57. Monastic life also helped to change structures which perpetuate poverty
58. Compassion is not an option, but an integral part of the life of a disciple of Jesus

Freeing prisoners

59. The liberation of any and all who are oppressed is a sign of the Kingdom of God
60. Our God frees us from concrete oppression
61. When people are enslaved, the Church steps in to remove the shackles and become a paschal sign
62. Freedom is freedom from any kind of slavery

Witnesses of evangelical poverty

63. A simple and poor life style becomes a witness and a prophetic sign
64. It is in giving that we receive
65. Voluntary poverty is a prophetic sign
66. We live out the Gospel practically when we acknowledge dependence on God and not material things
67.We become small in order to welcome the small. When the Church strips herself of everything, she becomes the light of the world [Mt 5:14-15]

The Church and the education of the poor

68. We cannot teach without loving
69. When we are Educators, we need to regard each child as a unique gift from God. Teaching furthers the Kingdom of God)
70. As much as we can we need to make education available to all
71.We teach through our lives before teaching with words
72. We do not do a favour to the poor when we educate them. It is our duty

Accompanying migrants

73. God is present in migrants
74. The world is our place of mission
75. We need to be bridge-builders

At the side of the least among us

76. We need to reach out to those who lack material goods and a voice on their behalf
77. Prayer which leads to Christ fills us with strength to reach out to the poor
78. We need to respond to precariousness with creativity, obstacles with tenderness and need with unshakeable faith.
79.Serving the poor is not a gesture to be made “from above,” but an encounter between equals, where Christ is revealed and adored.

Popular Movements

80. Inclusion is the need of the hour
81. We need to focus on the structural causes of poverty

CHAPTER FOUR
A HISTORY THAT CONTINUES

The century of the Church's Social Doctrine

82. Constant dialogue is the need of the hour

83. The content of the Social teaching of the Church is rich. We need to keep referring to it

84. The mystery of Christ in the Church has always been and today is, in a particular way, the mystery of Christ in the poor."

85. The poor are representatives of Christ)

86 We need to constantly ask "How much is enough?"

87. Our option must always be for the poor

88. We need to reform structures and create those which work for justice and equality

89. The Church must be moved by the masses of the poor suffering from unemployment, underemployment, unjust wages and sub-standard living conditions.

Structures of sin that create poverty and extreme inequality

90. The Church must stand at the side of the poor and work actively for their integral development

91. Charity has the power to change reality

92. Today is the day to act. We must not procrastinate

93. Sometimes sacrifices are demanded of the masses to serve the needs of the powerful

94.Inequality is the root of social ills

95.Are the less gifted not human beings? Do the weak not have the same dignity as ourselves? Are those born with fewer opportunities of lesser value as human beings? Should they limit themselves merely to surviving?

96. We need to be other-centered in everything we do

97. The Kingdom of God which we seek, is a kingdom of fraternity, justice, peace and dignity

98.The concern for the purity of the faith demands giving the answer of effective witness in the service of one's neighbour, the poor and the oppressed in particular, in an integral theological fashion."

The poor as subjects

99. The table of life must be shared by all

100. The poor live out their faith in a unique and tangible manner and teach us how we must live our faith

101 Living with the poor is one of the highest forms of evangelical life

102. Only by relating our complaints to their sufferings and privations can we experience a reproof that can challenge us to simplify our lives.

CHAPTER FIVE

A CONSTANT CHALLENGE

103. As the Body of Christ, the Church experiences the lives of the poor as her very "flesh," for theirs is a privileged place within the pilgrim people of God.

104. We need to give the poor time and loving actions. We are to stand by them in difficult moments, striving to transform their situations

The Good Samaritan, once again

105. Are we like the Priest or Levite or like the Samaritan in our response to the one who fell among robbers?
106.Tangible action rather than condemnation or even platitudes, is the need of the hour
107. We get so caught up in our own small worlds that we become indifferent to what is happening around us

An inescapable challenge for the Church today

108. Do not store unused the good things you possess
109. Too much focus on the wealth we have may make us blind and deaf to the sufferings of our brothers and sisters
110. For Christians, the poor are not a sociological category, but the very "flesh" of Christ.
111. The Church is in solidarity with the poor by the very nature of her being
112. Christianity is a communitarian religion. It is a religion of me, my community, my God and our God
113. The Church community must have as its Mission helping the poor to live with dignity
114. Spiritual care of the poor is as important as material care

Almsgiving today

115. We must assist those we can to find a good job. When we cannot do that, almsgiving becomes a means of contact.
116. We share our bread with the poor through Almsgiving
117. Almsgiving is other centered
118. The Lord asks for mercy not sacrifice
119. Almsgiving helps us to reach out to others and must be done with diligence and social responsibility
120. Christian love like the love of Jesus is unconditional and sets no limits
121. We are the ones who must reach out to the poor

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 4 October, the Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi, in the year 2025, the first of my Pontificate.

सुसंस्कृत !!

....वेन्सी डिमेलो.

धर्म सुसंस्कृतपणा शिकवतो. विविध धर्मातील उपासना सण सोहळे त्यास मौलिक मदत करतात. गीत, संगीत मंत्रमुग्ध करते. त्या ध्यानात जीव शीवाशी संवाद होतो. ह्या साधनेतून मानवी जीवन सुसंस्कृत बनते. धर्म न मानणारेही बऱ्यावाईटातील फरक ओळखून सात्विक जीवन जगतानाची अनेक उदाहरणे आहेत.

पण आजकाल गोपाळकाला, विघ्नहर्ता गणपतीच्या पवित्र उत्सवापासून अगदी दूर्गामाता दसऱ्यापर्यंतच्या उत्सवातील बाजारी पण, रात्र रात्र जागवून दिसणारा हिडीसपणा. नाचगाणी, लादलेले ध्वनी प्रदुषण.जबरदस्तीने वसूल केला जाणारा चंदा खंडणी हे नक्कीच सुसंस्कृतपणाचे लक्षण नाही. आणि अशा विकृतीला सोबत करणारे नक्कीच सुसंस्कृत देशाचे हीत साधणारे नाहीत.

हे आपल्या भारतीय संस्कृतीतच घडते असे नाही. तर पाश्चात्य संस्कृतीतही हा हिडीसपणा आधीपासूनचाच आहे. तिथेही आता धर्मरक्षकही नाचू लागले आहेत. ठेका धरू लागले आहे. कलात्मक नाचणे आणि वेडावाकडा ठेका धरणे हावभाव करणे हे लगेच लक्षात येते. त्यांच्या ओठावरची गाणीच त्यांची संस्कृती नि संस्कार दाखवतात.

ह्या हिडीसपणाला कुठला धर्म जात पात वर्ज नाही. ही पशूवत मानवी विकृती आहे. विचार विवेकानी त्याची सुसंस्कृत रचना केली आहे इतकेच. ती उच्च जातीतील कुळात कुलील घाशिराम कोतवालांमध्येही दिसेल आणि इतर सर्वसामान्य माणसातही..

पण उच्च कुलीन मानणाऱ्यात जसा सुसंस्कृतपणा आहे तसा तो सर्वसामान्य माणसातही पहावयास मिळतो. अशी अनेक उदाहरणे आपल्या समोर आहेत. उच्चकुलीन अभिनेते अभिनेत्री पहा. त्यांची कलाकारी. तशीच सामान्यकुळातील कलाकारांतही ती पहायला मिळते. ह्यास सुसंस्कृतपणा म्हणतात.

गरबा नृत्य किती कलात्मक आणि त्यातील गाणी किती सात्विक सुंदर नि सुसंस्कृत असलेला मिलाफ आहे. पण अशा सृजनतेस जेव्हा अश्लील व्यसनी बाजारपण येते तेव्हा अशा गरब्यात कुमारीका गर्भवती झाल्याच्या तक्रारी कानी ऐकू येतात. आणि त्यासाठी एका विशिष्ट समाजाला टार्गेट करून त्या युवकानाच जबाबदार धरले जाते. हे चुकीचे आहे.

सुसंस्कृत घरंदाज घरातील मुले मुली नाचवल्या आणि नासवल्या जात नाहीत. हा जीवनानुभव आहे. कारण अशा जबाबदार पालकांना कळते. तारुण्यातील वेळ हा मुलामुलींनी कुठे कसा नि कधी किती खर्च करायचा.

अभिनेत्री माधुरी दीक्षित नेनेंचे उदाहरण घ्या. कुलीन घरंदाज शालीन अशा घरात जन्म. अंधेरीतील कॉन्व्हेन्ट शाळेत संस्कार नि शिक्षण. कलात्मकता ग्रेसफूल नृत्याची आवड. पालकांनी तिचे करियर अडवले नाही. ती जीवनात सर्वांगीण सर्वगुणसंपन्न यशस्वी झाली.

भारतरत्न सचिन घ्या खेळात उच्चपदी पोहचूनही सात्विक सोज्ज्वळता शालीनता कायम. अशा विनयतेची उदाहरणे बऱ्याचदा सर्वसामान्य गरीब कुटुंबातही पहायला मिळतात. हा सुसंस्कृतपणा.

तात्पर्य सुसंस्कृतपणा हा धर्मातून येतो.
धर्म न पाळणाऱ्यातूनही येतो. मात्र धर्मांध अंधभक्त आणि धर्मांध नेत्यांच्या सावलीत नि संगतीत अशा सुसंस्कृत देशाला काळीमा फासला जातो हेही तितकेच खरे.

भूक आणि तहान !! वेन्सी डिमेलो

ओंजळीतून सांडू
जाण्याआधी
भूकेलेल्याला
ते अन्न दे.
आणि मग गीत गा
करशील जे
गरीबांसाठी
होईल ते
माझ्यासाठी.
ओंजळभर पाणी
जरूर पी. परंतु
सांडून जाण्याआधी
ओंजळभर पाणी
वाचव.
रयतेला जागृत कर
आणि मग गा...
दिले प्यावया
तान्हेल्याला
आणि
आश्रय दिला
निराश्रीताला.
मग ते असे
भक्ती गीत
जे कधी देवळातून
गायची गरजच नाही...

मिशन !! वेन्सी डिमेलो

विविधांगी बाग बनवून
ती मिशन म्हणून त्याने
आदाम एवेच्या हवाली
केली. आणि म्हणाला,
हे तुमचे मिशन
ह्याची निगराणी करा
पण ते कृतघ्न राहिले.
तीच री ओढून दोन भाऊ
काईन नि आबेल भांडले.
जमिनीच्या तुकड्यासाठी...
देवाचे मिशन अपूर्ण
ठेवून.

पुढे फारो म्हणाला,
भाकर की स्वातंत्र्य तू
ठरव."
मोशे भाकर लाथाडून पुढे
निघाला आपल्या लोकांना
घेऊन. मुक्तीसाठी
मधा दुधाच्या प्रदेशात...
देवाच्या मिशनसाठी....

पुढे पुत्र ही आला ख्रिस्त
होऊन.
त्यासाठी मेलाही....म्हणून
मिशन आजही आहे उभे
अबाधित...
प्रेम दया क्षमा शांती
सेवा
स्वातंत्र्य समता बंधुता
एकता न्यायासाठी..
पुनरुत्थित आशेने....

जागतिक पोलिओ दिन!! मीना बनसोडे.

दरवर्षी २४ ऑक्टोबर हा दिवस जागतिक पोलिओ दिन म्हणून साजरा केला जातो. पोलिओ या गंभीर आजाराबद्दल जनजागृती करणे आणि जगातून पोलिओचे पूर्णपणे उच्चाटन करणे हा या दिवसाचा मुख्य उद्देश आहे. पोलिओमुक्त जग निर्माण करण्यासाठी या दिवसाला विशेष महत्त्व आहे. आणि आज त्याला चांगले यश प्राप्त होताना दिसत आहे.

पोलिओ हा विषाणूमुळे होणारा संसर्गजन्य आजार आहे. हा आजार प्रामुख्याने लहान मुलांना होतो. पोलिओ विषाणूमुळे मुलांच्या मज्जासंस्थेवर परिणाम होऊ शकतो आणि काही वेळा कायमचे अपंगत्वही येऊ शकते. त्यामुळे या आजारापासून बचाव करण्यासाठी लहान मुलांना पोलिओची लस देणे अत्यंत आवश्यक आहे. आज ही लस खेडोपाडी उपलब्ध आहे.

जागतिक पोलिओ दिनाची सुरुवात पोलिओ लसीच्या विकासात महत्त्वाचे योगदान देणारे आणि लस शोधून काढणारे शास्त्रज्ञ डॉ. जोनास सॉल्क यांच्या जन्मदिनानिमित्त करण्यात आली. हा दिवस लोकांना पोलिओ प्रतिबंधक लसीकरणाचे महत्त्व समजावून सांगतो. तसेच आरोग्य कर्मचारी, डॉक्टर, स्वयंसेवक आणि पालक यांना पोलिओ निर्मूलनाच्या कार्यासाठी प्रोत्साहित करतो.

पोलिओपासून बचाव करण्यासाठी प्रत्येक बालकाला आरोग्य विभागाच्या वेळापत्रकानुसार पोलिओचे सर्व आवश्यक डोस देणे गरजेचे आहे. भारतात पल्स पोलिओ मोहिमेद्वारे पाच वर्षांखालील मुलांना पोलिओचे थेंब पाजले जातात. पालकांनी आपल्या मुलांचे लसीकरण पूर्ण करून घ्यावे. स्वच्छता राखणे, स्वच्छ पाणी पिणे आणि परिसर स्वच्छ ठेवणे यांमुळेही संसर्गाचा धोका कमी करण्यास मदत होते.

भारताने पोलिओ निर्मूलनासाठी मोठ्या प्रमाणावर प्रयत्न केले. सरकार, आरोग्य कर्मचारी, स्वयंसेवक आणि नागरिक यांच्या सहकार्यामुळे भारतात पोलिओवर नियंत्रण मिळवण्यात यश आले. अशा सर्व ज्ञात अज्ञात
पोलिओ संवर्धन देवदूतांना आजच्या शुभदिनी
कौतुककास्पद सलाम.