

Chilume 2021



"A caged bird can still sing"

PRAYER FOR THE IGNATIAN YEAR (2021-2022)

Eternal Lord of all things, you chose Ignatius to gather companions into your service and to be called by your name.

You opened their hearts to the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that they could serve your Church and bring the consolations of your healing and redemptive love to all men and women.

You called them to follow you in poverty and humility under the banner of the Cross with unwavering faith and a generous heart, whatever the cost.

You have never ceased to provide for your Society and to open ever new roads in your service.

Lord, we pray that you continue to call men to serve you in this Society. In this Ignatian year as we pray "to see all things new in Christ," grant us the grace to accompany them with the gift of discernment.

Grant us that discreet charity so that we may know how to propose this way to them not only in words, but also by the integrity and joy of our lives, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our mission.

Grant us the openness and generosity to welcome them into our communities, so that they may know that you are truly in our midst, and that we are your friends, gathered and ready to be sent wherever and whenever you choose to call us.

Above all, let us show in our lives and in our work that this is a sure path to you, in loving service of your Church and the world. Amen.

Ignatius

**"TO SEE ALL THINGS
NEW IN CHRIST"**





Superior's Message

Fr Ronald Pais SJ

Bridge of Spies, an inspiring movie, focuses on Donovan and his interactions with a captured Soviet spy, Rudolf Abel, amid the heightened stakes of post-World War II society. It's Abel who takes to calling Donovan the Standing Man. Abel says: "You remind me of a man who visited our house when I was a child. My father said to watch him closely. But he never did anything remarkable until one day our house was surrounded by border guards. They beat my father. Beat my mother. And they beat this man. Each time they beat him, he stood up. They beat him harder. Each time, he got back on his feet. I think, because of this, they stopped beating him and let him live. A Standing Man! That is what he was. A Standing Man."

Fr Stan Swamy was not just a standing man at the age of 84; he stood up for something bigger than himself. As a Jesuit Priest, he stood up valiantly for human dignity and rights. He stood, sat, and walked with the downtrodden. He stood for God who seeks Justice. When "sipper and straw" became outcry of the nation, Fr Stan decried that as a nation we need to focus on the plight of the unjustly incarcerated and the marginalized. Though frail-looking, he was lion-hearted like Jesus taking up the cross. Fr Stan all along stood up for the dignity and empowerment of the downtrodden was stripped naked of his mantle of rights and dignity by NIA and the draconian UAPA laws. The nefarious powers can kill the body but seldom silence the spirit of their soul. The caged but divinely liberated bird will sing forever.

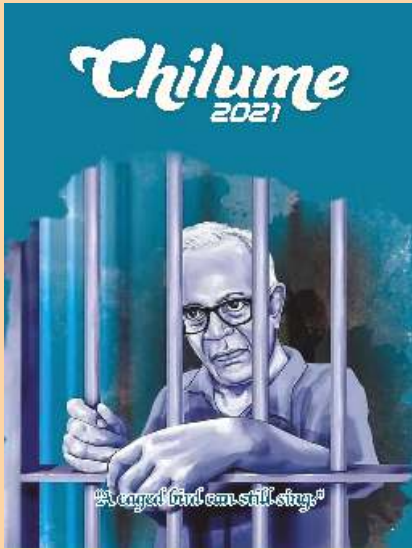
In this annual magazine, Chilume, the creative, confident, and courageous Jesuit scholastics of Asha Kiran are not just celebrating Fr Stan's life and work but dare to re-iterate and retell his story. The truth of his story shall never be forgotten. The Bombay high court post Fr Stan's death weaved this one-sentence story, "Such a wonderful person." The kind of service he has rendered to society is phenomenal. We have great respect for his work." We shall tell his story again and again till faith meets justice.

Unless wheat of grain dies it cannot bear much fruit. Fr Stan's custodial death needs to awaken the good-willed people, who conveniently are silent, stir the consciousness of the divisive minds, open our hearts to many under-trials languishing in prisons, and renew the commitment of the followers of Jesus Christ.

I congratulate the editorial team of Chilume steered by Schs. Pankaj Murmu and Ajay George. Despite the wreckage of the Covid 19, heart-wrenching woes of the migrants and farmers, uninterrupted online classes, and uncertainty of examination they have been resilient and resolute in bringing out this magazine.

This year Jesuits globally are re-living another powerful story- the transformation of St Ignatius five centuries ago. Our founder lost a battle but God won the war. He yielded to God and stood for God's greater glory. Fr Stan Swamy too stood up for God's Justice. May their lives and their stories through this magazine help us to stand up for something and someone greater than ourselves. Be and become a standing man and standing woman.

CHILUME 2021



COVER PAGE
IMAGE COURTESY

EDITOR

Sch. Pankaj Murmu SJ (DUM)

COPY EDITORS

Fr Sebastian Kanekkattil SJ (PAT)

Sch. Ajay J George SJ (DEL)

GUIDANCE

Fr Alphonse Fernandes SJ (KAR)

Fr Ronald Pais SJ (KAR)

PHOTOGRAPH BY

Sch. Prathap SJ (KAR) & Team

PRINTED AT

Codialbail Press, Mangaluru

PUBLISHED BY

Asha Kiran, Mangaluru

(For Private Circulation Only)

EDITOR'S DESK

Sch. Pankaj (DUM)



"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you delivering you to the synagogues and prison, bringing you before kings and governors for my name's sake (Lk 21:12)."

The year 2020 has been both an opportunity and a challenge for all of us. In other words we might say that the year 2020 has presented itself as a curse to many people, undoubtedly because the Covid-19. The present generation need not be told, shown documentaries or videos and even asked to think or imagine about the signs of the times, for they have witnessed with their naked eyes, lived and experienced together with the whole humanity the signs of the times. While on one hand the Covid-19 has affected everyone's life directly and indirectly, it has also been a blessing to us in different ways of which we might or might not be aware. The pandemic offered us ample time to live and reflect over ourselves, our families, friends and the suffering humanity. For sometimes, it also brought about the serenity in the environment due to complete lockdown. Amid this human created disease we began to live a new way of normal life with the hope (which all should hope for) that this suffering too will pass away.

In such situation, Fr Stan Swamy, whom ,by now, we have known well, was arrested and charge sheeted on October 8th, 2020 by NIA under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for his alleged role in the 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence and links to the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The priest, who is a Tribal Rights and Social Activist, stands as an intransigent disciple of Christ. Being the follower of Christ he lives his life for Christ and his people. The very fact that he is a follower of Christ is that he sides justice and truth. He clearly knew and learnt from the teaching of Jesus (Lk 21:12).

When we desire to be followers of Christ, we do give up everything to Him: our lives, our ambitions, our relationships, our talents and everything we possess. We recognize that God is the true owner of our entire being. We commit ourselves wholly to Him and to His purpose. But this commitment is possible only when we have complete faith in Him. Our faith gives meaning to our suffering. Through our faith in God our suffering becomes something that we can embrace as an act of love. The Gospel of St John reminds us about this, "No one has greater love than this, than to lay down one's life for one's friends (Jn 15:13)."

Fr Stan, by being with the native tribes of Jharkhand, abides by what St John writes. He is the man, unselfish, bold and great realist who chose the cross of Christ daily for the sake of constructing a better social status and life for the Adivasis of Jharkhand. He raised his voice on behalf of those voiceless tribes, because amidst them in every way openly and rampantly, the human as well as constitutional values are either compromised or violated. As a consequence, Fr Stan has paid the price for raising voice against these ongoing inequality and oppression.

Therefore, we dedicate this annual magazine, 'Chilume 2021' to Fr Stan Swamy, who once again, reminds us what it is to be a follower of Christ. We are confident that the life of Fr Stan has inspired us and will continue to encourage us to be true Disciples of Christ. With this hope let's move ahead and have a happy reading.

COMMUNITY DAYS



FOR THE MISSION



BASKETBALL MATCH



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION





The Good Samaritan

In the sacred scriptures of all religions, love, fraternity, equality and social justice have their own significance and worth. They are the fabrics on which the entire universe is knit together. In the Islamic tradition, justice can be seen as the exercise of reason and free will or the practice of judgment and responsibility. It urges one to exercise generosity beyond obligation. In Hinduism, the Lord is the protector of justice, and you will be blessed if you follow justice. Whatever be the circumstances, *dharma* should ultimately be established. Christians believe in the teachings of Christ that blessed are they who do well, seek and bring justice and correct oppression and inequality. For every individual to get acclimatized and inspired by these teachings may sound like impossible lifelong task or superficial



practices. However, down the historical lane, hundreds and thousands of men and women followed these teaching not just for self-sanctifications alone, but, for the

wellbeing of the suffering, marginalized and discriminated people. No matter what country they belonged to, which religion they believed in and which category of age, gender, ethnicity and family backgrounds they are in; all of them strived to build a society that is based on equality, justice, fraternity and brotherhood.



Sch. Ajay (DEL)

Even today, we have many social activists, philanthropists and change-makers who tirelessly work for a better humanity with a greater conviction. One among them is Fr Stanley LourduSwamy S.J., an octogenarian Jesuit priest who is falsely accused and jailed. The police allege that 84-year-old Jesuit priest is a member of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) and was involved in a conspiracy to instigate caste violence in the Bhima Koregaon village near Pune in 2018. In a more tolerant time, Father Stan Swamy would have been commended for the work he has done. A nation that should be proud of his contribution has instead arrested the 83-year-old Jesuit priest on false charges so that an agenda can be fulfilled. Father Swamy has spent 60 years



living and working with the most marginalized tribal communities in Bihar and Jharkhand belt. A social worker, activist and educator, his story is what legends are made of.

To know Fr Stan closely, we must engage knowing the life he lived, his convictions, his desires and the values he stands for. Born on April 26, 1937, in a village in Tamil Nadu's Tiruchirappalli, Swamy went to the well-known St Joseph's School in the district. Inspired by the work of the Jesuit priests with whom he came in touch with during his school days, Swamy decided to join the order himself – but in undivided Bihar. He started religious studies on May 30, 1957, committing himself totally to the cause of the marginalized and the poor.

The real break through with regard to his ideas about social action came in 1965, when he began his regency, the stage at which trainee Jesuits spend two years taking up one or two works of the order. Swamy spent this time at St Xavier's High School Lupungutu, Chaibasa, West Singhbhum.

His experiences as a teacher and hostel prefect had a deep impact on him. He used to go to the weekly bazaar in Chaibasa on Tuesdays (the Mangal-haat) with his students and saw for himself how the outsider merchants and their agents cheated the *Adivasis*. "I felt pain but could not do anything about it," he said.

Towards the end of 1990s, the phenomenon of *Adivasis* and *Moolvasis* being displaced from their lands became rampant. Other Jesuits also became involved in mass struggles. The Netarhat Field Firing Range project in Palamu and Gumla districts and

the Koel-Karo Dam in Ranchi and West Singhbhum were threatening large-scale displacements of residents. Jesuits involved in social action felt that there was a need to establish a center in Ranchi to coordinate the efforts of organizations and movements in fighting the massive processes of marginalized communities becoming pauperized. Stan Swamy was given the responsibility of creating this center.

In Jharkhand, he kept his focus on issues affecting *Adivasi* societies, especially, defending their land and community rights over natural resources in their ethno-territories. He is alert on all ideologies, processes and policies that have been violating *Adivasis'* special constitutional and legal rights, speaking out against them. Swami's relentless fight against displacement and the violations of *Adivasi* rights by the government and corporate houses has made it difficult for some companies to advance the kind of model they favor – development that impoverishes the many while favoring the very few, advances inequality and injustice and causes environmental and ecological disasters. Consequently, there have been continuous efforts by the powerful to silence him.

In recent times, a soon-to-be released film's captions read, "Powerful people come from powerful places, but the history was wrong, powerful people make the places powerful." Fr Stan has set up for us an example to follow, a path to tread and convictions to hold. Whatever be the intolerant times, we can make a difference by courageously standing for truth, peace, justice and equality. ■



Jesuit Formation; Characteristics and Challenges

“What is it to be a Jesuit?”- It is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was.” Though a Jesuit is very cogently defined in the above words, it is not always easy to actually realise what this means. Once a Jesuit enters the Society of Jesus, he constantly asks himself this question throughout his formation. The Society provides a platform to those who aspire to serve God in this beautiful, yet groaning world. Jesuit formation prepares the Jesuit what he has been called for, and hence it plays a very important role in the life of a Jesuit. As a Jesuit in formation myself, I would like to share a few thoughts on the above mentioned topic. I would like to begin with some significant characteristics of Jesuit formation.

1. Grounded in Ignatian Spirituality: Ignatian spirituality is the source and strength of the Jesuits as it disposes them discover practical ways of Finding God in the hustle and bustle of our busy lives. It makes them realise how God could be present in the mundane circumstances and ordinary people. Every Jesuit in formation is expected to realise the essence of this spirituality which is so coherent and relevant even today just as it was in the sixteenth century. We unceasingly try to imbibe the spirit of Ignatius by our

faithfulness in making his spirituality our own and deepening our understanding of it. Furthermore, the lives of our Jesuit predecessors encourage and motivate us to harness the inestimable potential hidden in the everyday practice of Ignatian Spirituality.



Sch. Rudolf (KAR)

2. A Personal Responsibility: Our formation is a personal responsibility. Our progress in the religious life largely depends on our desire to grow and the amount of dedication we deploy in forming ourselves. Emphasis is given to our freedom and our initiatives. However, constant spiritual accompaniment is assured throughout the formation which has indeed proved a boon to all of us.

As the waves of the new technologies are cascading over us, as the whole world is stepping into an era of turbulence and war, as the human life itself is in the brink of extinction through its own misadventures which have provoked nature to rebel against it, our Jesuit formation is becoming ever more challenging. I would like to highlight two such challenges we face during our formation.



1. Striving for excellence despite uncertainties: Life is full of uncertainties. This pandemic has clearly taught us this lesson. The path of a Jesuit, too, is filled with challenges, obstacles and failures. It is a challenge to every Jesuit in formation



to realise this harsh reality of life. What is more challenging is our commitment to the Ignatian 'Magis' which demands that we strive for excellence without being satisfied with the minimum. Deepening and renewing our interior freedom and energy for the 'magis' opens us to new and enriching perspectives. It is this same spirit of 'magis' which led Ignatius to found the Society to form men who could serve God and his people, it is the same 'magis' which stoked the zeal of our legendary missionaries to go to unknown lands and it is the same 'magis' which is inspiring the present Jesuits not to be satisfied with the 'already existing', rather to venture into something new and better, despite knowing that uncertainties lie ahead. We are challenged by this motto to shirk our mediocrity and discern ways to give ourselves better and fully in whatever we do.

2. Balancing Spirituality and Activism:

This is one of the greatest challenges a Jesuit in formation faces. The Jesuit order is an apostolic order. As expected, Jesuits immerse themselves fully into the apostolate they are engaged in. As we are busy in our works, there is a danger that



we disdain prayer and the spirituality which laid the foundations for our Jesuit lives. Spirituality and apostolate, though they are seemingly contradictory, are, in fact, complementary. It is a great challenge for us to balance spirituality and activism. It is a constant struggle to find ways and means to bring spirituality into apostolate and experiences in various areas of our apostolates into prayer. It is only in this way that we could comprehend the depth of our spirituality which is compatible and applicable to every apostolate.

Jesuit formation is helping us to achieve integral development of our personality and is helping us to become persons with social conscience, interior freedom and limitless love for humanity. It is opening our hearts to hear the cry of the poor, the excluded and those whose dignity has not been respected. It is goading us on to endeavour for the Greater Glory of God in the service of humanity. ■



Religious Life Post Covid-19

Religious men and women have spent their lives in service of God and the people of God. *A life of prayer* is the core of religious life. It drives contemplation into further action. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a great chaos. Many people, including religious, are finding hard to reach out to people and help them.

We face an important challenge of people's presence. *Everyone has entered into a digital world.* Our virtual communications are aiding us to have a



smooth functioning and progress. There is a longing to go outside and visit places of interest. Sadly, we feel helpless due to the horror of contagion. Very soon, things will get complicated if a suitable vaccine is not found. After a few months, life may continue to remain the same. We have

enough time to relax and work from our residences. Life has become easier through quicker modes of sending information.

However, as religious, we can continue to work and pray for those who are in need of prayers and help. In our communities, let us continue to know each other better, help and promote a common cause of well-being. This is our time. We are blessed to be together. Continue to remain exemplary by finding joy in every little thing in life.

Religious life is a blessing. It is a call to serve selflessly. As far as possible, let us strive to make ourselves available for those who need our aid. No plague can stop us. Let service born out of love be our goal. Christ is still amidst us, helping us to battle this horrendous pandemic. All we need to have is a compassionate heart to see the wounded world. Thus, we can clearly grasp this mystery that has befallen us. Everything is not over yet. You and I can make a difference in these times. It is a moment of grace and healing. Live life, serving others joyfully in whatever you do. ■



Sch. Vivian (KAR)



The Onlooker

I sit and watch, amidst head over heels round me.
 I sew my mouth,
 Though time blooms to raise my voice.
 I shut my eyes,
 Though innocent - folks shoulders falling like teardrops;
 Bearing upon menacing injustice.



Sch. Anthony (KHM)

Deaf turns my ears, upon hearing the cries of suffering.
 Why thought I, sit here and watch?
 Allowing the earth to swallow up, leaving not leaving not,
 A foot print on sands of time.
 Yet, I stand, I still, I stagger.
 My safety, my security, I scare - For a silent spectator am I.

Can one stay silent when the fire consumes the trees?
 Won't you show a path to the stranded youth,
 Or a soul that yearns for fresh water?
 Rooflessness makes shivering to death.
 Wealth chaser ripping people shrink the skin to bones.



Provoking thought gush forth like a spring water.
 Boiling and burning my heart -
 Leading me to be a player in life.
 No matter the game, I continue to play.



**THANK
YOU**

**FR. ALPHONSE
FERNANDES, SJ**

WELCOME



**FR. RONALD
PAIS, SJ**





Afraid to Breathe

Our mother earth – the only planet in the universe that sustains life – is ailing and suffocating today for its existence. Obviously, the environmental pollution is threatening the earth and its health. The two basic elements on which all life depends are water and the air; which are today highly polluted and poisonous. As a result, our survival is challenged – we are afraid to breathe.

It is estimated that every year 4.2 million people die due to lung cancer, heart diseases, stroke, and chronic respiratory diseases, which are caused by air pollution. The highly populated areas in the world are the cities, most of which are covered with the blanket of poisonous air. The



creators of this poisonous air are none but we - the educated and the civilized human beings of society.

In the name of development, economic progress, 4G and 5G standards of life, we have exploited and destroyed the planet. Most governments around the world are economy oriented and



Sch. Fransis (DUM)

blissfully ignoring the deteriorating environment. Even if some governments show some interests in environment, that's purely hypocritical. For instance, if a government urges people not to cut trees but when it comes to expanding industries and mineral extraction, they displace people (sometimes whole villages), bury the forest and exploit the hills and mountains – the mother earth. Another such example is the use of polyethene; the government urges people to avoid the use of plastic but allows industries to manufacture them. This is the sad reality we are witnessing today.

The use of good quality water for drinking and the air for breathing are the fundamental rights (basic needs) of every human being, both of which seem to be diminishing at the present era. The human health and the average life span are gradually deteriorating. If we remain ignorant, we may end up living unhealthy and deformed life. We may purify the



polluted water for our use but we can't do so with the polluted air (though the former doesn't apply in the wider sense).

The immediate need of the world is to stop the growing rate of pollution and take concrete actions to help improve the environment. Each one of us is responsible

to take care of the environment but the community has a bigger role to play in this regard. Every community, society, organisation and the nation must genuinely engage in maintaining the purity of water, air and the whole environment – the mother earth.

Prison Life, a great leveller

Inside the daunting prison gates
All belongings taken away
But for the bare essentials.

'You' comes first
'I' comes after
'We' is the air one breathes.

Nothing is mine,
Nothing is yours,
Everything is ours.

No leftover food thrown away,
All shared with the birds of the air;
They fly in, have their fill and happily
fly out.

Sport to see so many young faces
I ask them: "Why are you here?"
They told it all, not mincing words.



From each, as per capacity,
To each, as per need,
Is what socialism is all about?

Lo, this commonality is wrought by
compulsion.
If only all men would embrace it
freely and willingly,
All would truly become children of
Mother Earth.

Fr Stan Swamy SJ

(Fr. Stan Swamy SJ from the *Taloja* prison, to his Jesuit companions and friends)



Science : A Revolution

Suppose a Viking manages to catch a wormhole in his voyage, and lands amid Columbus' expeditions. He would definitely be surprised but he would surely comprehend things quickly. What if he was to end up in 2021? He would feel like a newborn in an alien world. The rapid change that the world has undergone can be attributed to the Scientific Revolution.

Science - as per Google, "the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment" - did very much exist and accompany the humans from their very first steps on the planet. However, during the last 500 years science



underwent a totally unprecedented revolution unlike any other tradition of knowledge.

The modern science is characterised by certain critical features. They are the willingness to admit ignorance, the employment of mathematical tools and the acquisition of new powers. The awareness of what we don't know has indeed enabled us to set out to discover, fix things, improvise and improve our status constantly. The primary concern is no longer content with creating theories: it craves to acquire and develop new technologies.



Sch. Eby (KER)

The Post-Truth:

Today's society is often called a post-truth society. Thanks to the wide spread of social media for that. But a general and closer look at the history testifies that humans have always been, a post truth society. Ever wondered why only Sapiens managed to survive and dominate the earth of Neanderthals, hobbits and other hominis species?

Homo Sapiensis a post-truth species, whose power depends on creating and believing fictions. Ever since the stone-age,



humans entertained shared belief in myths for self-reinforcing. We are the only mammals that can cooperate with numerous strangers because only we can invent fictional stories, spread them around, and convince millions of others to believe in them. Certainly, we do enjoy a clear advantage over other species in dominating the planet. As long as everybody believes in the same fictions, we all obey the same laws, and can thereby cooperate effectively.

Much of the content of the religious books are fictional. But that doesn't make them something to be despised. They foster in their readers values of compassion, love, justice and courage. By bringing people together, religious creeds make large-scale human cooperation possible. Similar notions are served in movements like nationalism, fascism, communism and so on.

Science & the Post-Truth Society:

The willingness to admit ignorance has made modern science more dynamic, supple and inquisitive than any previous tradition of knowledge. But it presents us with a serious problem that most of our ancestors did not have to cope with. Our current assumption that we do not know everything, and that even the knowledge we possess is tentative, extends to the shared myths that enable millions of strangers to cooperate effectively. If the

evidence shows that many of those myths are doubtful, how can we hold society together? How can our communities, countries and international systems function?

Myth or Truth - The Chances:

Turning your back towards science is not suggested at all as a way to progress or establishing socio-political order. Science, being an efficient instrument in the search for truth, should be embraced and acknowledged. Those at the helm of religions, over time, have exhibited apprehension in opening their doors to science simply because it challenges some of the age-old beliefs. If they persist to be apprehensive, they are soon to become irrelevant.

But terming science to be absolute is a tragedy. Max Planck says, "Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of universe. Because, in the final analysis, we ourselves are parts of a mystery that we are trying to solve." The stories, shared myths invented by humans can spring from a deeper shared notion. They can cease to be inspiration-less. The values of love, care and growth can be the reason why they put up these myths. One with enough sense cannot possibly call the humanly-felt world to be absolute.

(Courtesy: A Brief History of Humankind, Yuval Noah Harari)



My Beautiful Journey in the Society of Jesus

The beautiful things that I admire in the Society of Jesus cannot be fully expressed in words. Let me take this privilege to acknowledge some. The thing that I cherish most in the Society is that it allows me to make mistakes but still accepts me as I am. It provides me ample opportunities for growth. I really enjoy the freedom and responsibility the Society gives. The companionship I share in the Society is really marvelous, even though we come from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. I could feel deep spiritual bonding among ourselves.



Motherly care and fatherly concern of the formators are beyond imagination. Staying in the formation, for me, is like a being a flower in the garden, filled with flowers of different colors, sizes and structures. They bloom on their own and each one has its own beauty to admire.

The formators are like gardeners-caring, watering and manuring the plants to make them grow to the fullest.



Sch. Thomas (KHM)

At times, pruning my own ego by the formators is painful. Dying to oneself and growing to the fullest is the ongoing process and the hope of the future. Everything is well planned in the house of formation. In this way, my formation in this house goes on smoothly. Those who can adjust will find meaning in the community and the religious life. In the house of formation, we follow the same rhythm of life every day. I find its beauty of life each day.

The constant guiding of the spiritual guides is also one of the beautiful things that I cherish. The trust I have in the them and they have in me mould and direct my path. The things that I cannot share with my friends, I confidently share with my spiritual guides. Their rich experiences and words of wisdom are beyond comparison.

At times I feel perplexed, let down and completely lost at the face of



unexpected twists and turns in my life. My plans may go awry and I feel frustrated as I fail to gauge the meaning of what is happening around me. When I feel life is too hard, purposeless and the world seems hopeless and cruel, I take heart. The best gift I can give everyone around me is my courage to shine, to help, to rise above the mundane realities around me, to be true to who I want to be and to be generous with the people who look up to me.

However, I don't expect the journey of life easier as I grow older, but I will understand it better and develop new insights based on my life experiences as different perspectives emerge and evolve in my life. What helps me to wade through the tough currents of life is not to allow the light within me to die out. I keep the light within me eternally shining by the habit of sharing, forgiving, caring and loving. ■



Who is Your God?

The radio comedian Fred Allen was noted for his off-the-cuff witticisms. Once he appeared on *The Tonight Show*, hosted by Jack Paar, who idolized him. Paar gushed, "You are my God!" Allen said, "Five thousand churches in New York and you have to be an atheist!"

Who is your God?

Wonder

While we're on the subject of Armstrongs, how about Neil, the astronaut. He was chatting with some famous travelers, picking their brains on countries they had visited. "But Mr. Armstrong," they said, "you've walked on the moon. We want to hear about your travels."

He said, "But that's the only place I've been."



ON GOING FORMATION TALKS



WELCOMING FIRST YEARS



WITH NATURE



WITH THE PEOPLE



BUDDING ARTISTS



Sch. Swethan (JAM)



Sch. Dominic (KHM)



Sch. Affin (KER)



A Tribute to Fr Stan

*A tortured man with love for the poor,
Soft spoken, gentle in heart as the poor,
Always raised his voice for their right.*

Yet, this seems to some, as a plight.

Accused and falsely charged.

He stands still; fully charged

Thrown into the dark

However, darkness for him is not dark.

He trots on till the last.

Fought a good fight.

He is gone, yet still alive,

His fire enkindles far and wide

And will forever shine.



Sch. Francis Kumou (KHM)

Ignatius500



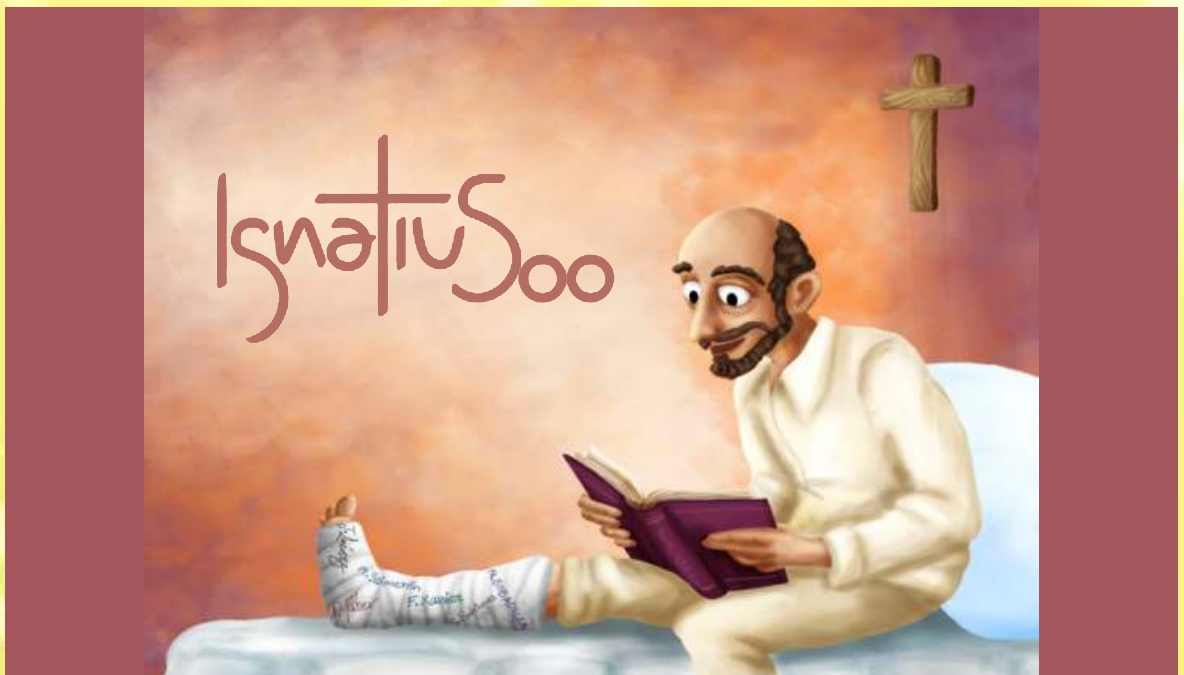
The Ignatian Year

From May 2021 until July 2022, the Society of Jesus celebrates an Ignatian Year. What is an Ignatian Year? May 20, 2021 marks the 500th anniversary of St Ignatius' conversion-that fateful day when Ignatius the soldier, struck by a cannonball, began his transformation into Ignatius the pilgrim.

God continues to invite each of us into a deepening relationship, to ongoing conversion. We believe that by embracing this invitation, we embrace our God who calls us to act in new, bold ways that reconcile our world, bringing about justice, peace and compassion.

For this Ignatian Year, we ask for the grace

'To see all things new in Christ'.





Be a Friend

The world-wide media carried a picture of a man 'MISSING'. Olivia Miranda had posted it after a 6 year-long search for the man she loved dearly. Responses for the post unexpectedly poured in from different parts of the globe. It was strange, however, that each response claimed a different identity. Can it be possible that there are men existing with similar appearance, Olivia wondered.

The first respondent Sonal Aggarwal, was a violinist from Rajasthan residing in Mumbai. Olivia met her after a philharmonic ensemble of the Bombay Chamber Orchestra. Avoiding her many admirers Sonal walked up to Olivia, saying, "Are you Ms. Miranda who is searching for Abhijeet?" "Is that the name with which you know him?", exclaimed Olivia.

"Yes, that's how I've known him", answered Sonal, "I need to tell you many things about him and I think this is not the right place. Would you please come over to my place now?" They both got into Mrs. Aggarwal's car.

After warming themselves up with a cup of coffee Sonal began to narrate her story.

"I was struggling with my violin lessons when I was doing my grades at Angel's Music Academy, Rajasthan. I had great desire to play in an orchestra, one day. Once I was asked to play at the auditions for an orchestra. In my nervousness, I

fumbled and ended up with false notes. I was a figure of fun amidst the crowd, but one man came up to me after the audition and said, 'your slurs were really amazing.'



Sch. Agil Roy (KAR)

Who could he be, but Abhijeet? We became best friends. He modified my composition, to make it a perfect piece. We met every day and now more than a friend he was my teacher. He wrote my first symphony. After that, I was asked to play in orchestras.

On the evening before my first philharmonic orchestra I was in vigour to invite him, but I couldn't find him anywhere."

Olivia's fervent desire to search for the man brought her to a businessman, Jude Attipetty, in Kochi, Kerala. Jude, after his evening walk in the marine drive, was coming back home. He was surprised to see the guest in his house admiring the paintings hung on the walls and talking to his wife. "I am Ms. Olivia Miranda, I am here because of your response to the post" Olivia greeted and continued "By the way, are you an artist, these paintings are really amazing and they show the love between you and your wife."



Jude answered, "Well, I am not an artist but the paintings have the answer for the questions you are going to ask me."

In a confused state Olivia replied "Sorry, I didn't get you."

"Please take your seat Ms. Miranda" he said with a smile, and continued heaving a sigh of relief. "Some years after my marriage, although I loved my wife ardently, I couldn't reach up to her expectations. Consequently, she misunderstood my love and one day she ceased speaking to me after a quarrel. We were living in the same house but never spoke to each other. Eventually I got into deep depression. My evening walk was the time to weep. One such day I met an interesting man who took notice of me and offered me a napkin to wipe away my tears. He hardly spoke anything but every day he was promptly beside me with a napkin. Finally, there were hardly any tears left, for he had wiped them away, just by his presence."

"As I got to know him, John George one fine day asked me 'why were you weeping?' The compassion in his gaze made me pour out before him all that happened between me and my wife, and I also told him how I loved her. He carefully listened but never spoke a word. He laughed for a joke, and at other times kept his face gloomy when I narrated sad incidents. He was eager to look at our wedding album. We became good friends and I invited him for dinner. Replenishing our glasses often we both got inebriated. Therefore, I held him back to stay and he agreed."

With tears in his eyes Jude continued "Next morning I found my wife sitting before me as she woke me up and hugged me. I was flabbergasted until I came to the hall and found paintings depicting our love story hung on the walls, which had rejuvenated her love for me. I realised it was John's work but he was nowhere to be found. That night he had stayed not because I forced him but it was all pre-planned."

Olivia was all agog "how queer this man was, that before someone could express their gratitude he disappeared."

Travelling across India Olivia discovered a lot about this man.

Annika Klimova, a young Russian architect, claims him to be her school teacher who brought out her hidden talent of architecture by helping her to play with building blocks.

An experienced doctor at St. Luke's International Hospital, Japan, said that he helped him to save many lives at crucial situations in the operation theatre.

Likewise, many different people have many different stories to tell but nobody knows where he is at present.

Aditya Padival, one of the respondents, however, broke Olivia's heart by his response.

"I know the man very well, but you're too late, he is dead."

With many an apprehension Olivia went to meet him; he was living in one of the bungalows in the suburbs of Bangalore. ■



The Secret Love

There is a past, present and future in life. The past was glorious once. It was filled with bliss, joy, and those moments still linger within Jammy. He was a successful man as a doctor. He married a very pretty girl and settled in the city according to his wife's desire. They were very happy as a newly married couple. Both were service minded, enjoyed mutual understanding and synergetic relationship. As they grew older they planned to have no kids of their own, rather to adopt a child from the Ashram. They set out in search of a child who can be their back bone in their future life. After a long search they found some kids in Ashram. They selected a child who was the youngest among many. So the child got new parents. They named him Robins. He grew up graciously under the care of his new parents. The parents were extremely blissful to have this child. They educated him by all means. Robins was loved very much by his new parents and he never missed parental love and also did not realize that Jammy and his wife were not his parents.

Robins grew up into adulthood like any other children. Meantime his mother was serious. His mother wanted to see a daughter in law and so they arranged a marriage for Robins. Robins married a beautiful girl, Ruby, and he was given all

the responsibility of the house. After a year, Robins' mother died. By now Robins was under the control of his wife Ruby. Jammy became old and was ill-treated by his daughter. He



Sch. Kuldeep (DAR)

was a burden to her. She wanted to get rid of her father. Robins was also dominated by his wife. Ruby planned to send his father to an old age house. When her husband came back from the office she convinced him but he was not happy with her plan. Nostalgically he took his father to an Ashram. Robins saw in the old age house young children, old men and women all were cheering and enjoying themselves. Robins asked one of the managers, "who is that old man with whom my father is talking as if he knew him from primeval?" He replied, "that man is also a manager of the house." Robins called that director and asked him, "do you know my father?" He got an answer 'Yes'. Robins asked him further, "how do you know my father?" The manager told him, "I know him from last twenty five years and we are good friends." He explained further: "He is the one who adopted you from this house when you were very young like those you see over



there, lying on the bed.” When Robins heard this, he cried literally. He came back home with a gloomy face. When his wife saw him melancholic, she asked: “why have you come back doleful?” Instantly he extended his hand towards her left cheek. He explained to her with tearful eyes saying, “today I am what I am, because of

my father. I was an orphan. My father Jammy adopted me, educated and gave me even his properties. Therefore, what I was in the past my father is my present and future.” Immediately both of them got up begged pardon from their father for their wrong doing, and once again joy and blissful happiness prevailed in the family.

We Are Here To Serve Not To Be Served

A sanyasi (Monk), Swami Satydev spent a day at Sabarmati Ashram and then expressed a wish to stay there.

“I like the work you do here,” he told Gandhiji.

Gandhiji said he was welcome to stay at the ashram was meant for people like him, but added

“You will have to put away your saffron robes, and dress like the others here.”

The Swami did not like that.” I am sanyasi (Monk)!” he protested.

“I’m not asking you to renounce sanyas,” explained Gandhiji.

“Sanyas is a state of mind. Dress has nothing to do with it.”

If you wear your ochre robes here, people will not allow you to do work out of respect for your robes, instead, they will serve you, and that would be contrary to the principles of this ashram. We are here to serve, not to be served.

The swami thought the matter over and decided to join the ashram.

On another occasion, a man in an advanced state of leprosy came to the ashram and asked for shelter.

“I’ve come to shed me skeleton here,” he said.

“I won’t go even if I’m pushed out.”

“How can I say there’s no shelter for you here?” said Gandhiji.

“You’re welcome.”

Nursed by Gandhiji, the man spent several days in the ashram before succumbing to the disease.





College on My Phone

The COVID-19 pandemic, all of a sudden, forced the entire world to shut down. Humanity fell on its knees with an utter sense of helplessness and humility. The unprecedented lockdown across the globe affected the normal life of the people. Flights and trains cancelled, businesses shutdown, schools and colleges closed, tourists banned, theatres, party halls, shopping malls and markets closed. Thousands stranded far from their homes and loved ones, mass migration of workers, students, tourists and so on and so forth. Utter sense of confusion, commotion and chaos swept across the globe.

Education is one of the worst affected sectors. For most of us, a drastic shift to digital or online classes was something unheard of or an alternative thought to be only for the developed countries. However, we had to undergo that painful transition from attending offline - face to face classes, to virtual or online classes. Initially everyone found it strange or rather challenging to sit up and listen to that digitalized voice coming across the screen.

I wish to highlight a few of my experiences and insights on my 'online' college life.

Retrospection

There is no greater memory and fun than that of a college life.

This year, no doubt, we have missed out a lot of things – the fun of bunking classes, fooling one another, sitting next one another, the opportunities and the activities we had together in the previous semesters

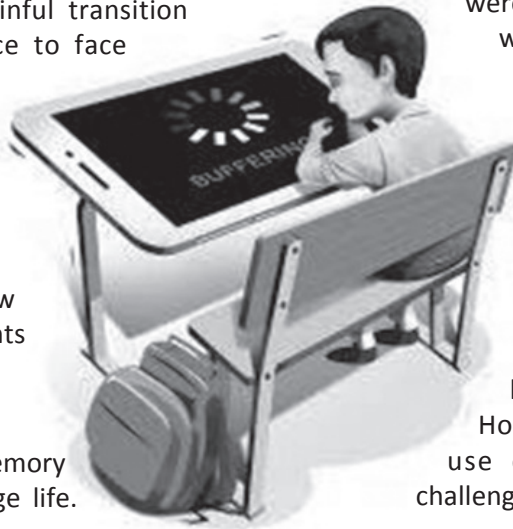


Sch. Augustine (KHM)

and I leave it to you to add your own list. I am sure, all of us felt this nostalgic and retrospective feelings of wanting to reconnect ourselves with our past memories – How I wish to be back in the college!

Challenges

This pandemic has challenged the entire humanity and specifically to those of us pursuing our education. When colleges were shut down so abruptly without any warning or prior information, I felt so cut off and denied. It took at least more than three months to initiate the online mode of education. During that period of confinement, I was left all alone with 24 hours at my disposal. How do I make judicious use of my time was the challenge. We have a saying 'we





cannot buy free time' however this pandemic offered me so freely. To be that disciplined and sincere student, keeping myself constantly in touch with the books was my challenge. For most of us, when there are no exams and pressures, definitely we take things for granted. That was my personal experience too. Being responsible and accountable for our academic continuity is what we seriously need to consider.

Creativity

This pandemic, in my opinion, has come as a blessing in disguise. Given the challenge and the life risking circumstances, this pandemic has tapped our innate capacity to creatively adapt to the new challenges. Not just in the field of education, every one creatively found different means to navigate through this tough times. Coming to education, of course, we cannot afford to be submissive but to creatively rise above such odds. The online mode of reaching out to students was a commendable achievement, the drastic shift in teaching methodology, the activities devised to keep the students engaged and many such initiatives. Students also had to adapt their study habits and attitudes, their thinking and reasoning, ever enhanced. All of these are clear signs of the unimaginable creative potential we have.

Empathy

Though many of us are privileged to gain access to the regular rhythm of

education via online classes, I cannot but empathize with thousands of students who just could not afford it. My heart genuinely goes out for some of my classmates with poor connectivity and as a result unable to receive information and study materials circulated in the respective classes. Some students (global context) had to give up and even go to the extent of committing suicide just because of the poor economic background of the family, which is an undigestable truth. I really do empathize with those unable to cope with this difficult life situation.

Gratitude and Hope

Finally, there is this deep sense of profound gratitude for keeping me safe throughout, for blessing me with good health, for all my teachers, friends, loved ones back home and so many other people I have encountered, who have in a way helped me navigate through this historic global pandemic. No matter how hard or risky this pandemic may seem, I am filled with hope. Hope, I think, is all we need to share with one another. Ultimately it is this undying hope and the spirit of resilience that has kept us going and will continue to stand by it. We will together as one human family brave this pandemic. To wrap up, my college life on a phone, has taught me far greater and valuable lessons to embrace humanity and feel the pulse of the entire globe. We will never give up!



On the Path to Life

“Is it my fate to be a girl? Is this why God created me? Is this the situation everywhere? Is this the freedom what we were waiting for...? What’s wrong in being a girl? Why are we always excluded and kept apart from the Men?” said a teary-eyed Seema to her interviewer.

“I was in my early teens having fun while grazing our goats and cows in the meadows of *Anantapur*. Physically, I was mature, but mentally nature had not revealed most of the things to me. At home, I helped my mother like most of the girls did. When we asked about our education the two common answers were: *‘You are girls, and after marriage you will surely be home-makers’*; *‘You girls are fragile and dumb and are not fit for studies.’*

I had great zeal and fervour to get educated. Not just the money played its trick on us, but the caste system and the gender discrimination too. Before my horizons were widened my parents bequeathed me to a handsome man who was active and energetic. In no time, all the rituals were performed and I was sent to Prajwal’s (my husband) home. He called me sweetly by my name. Unfortunately, this didn’t last long because this man was highly influenced by his mother and he danced to her tunes. My mother-in-law, with Prajwal’s help, started to take away the

joy and peace from my life. Adding to these vices, poverty struck and the drunkenness of Prajwal destroyed me. It became a herculean task for me to live.

There was enormous pressure on me to leave the house because I was uneducated, burdensome and of no use to them.

The only consolation I received was when I went to fetch some water from the river. The ladies of our village shared their turmoil and to my surprise there ran a common thread. We were tired of living this life which was filled with curse.

One day, we decided to go to the East to earn our livelihood. One of the village girls who had gone there had become rich within few years was a rumour spread by *Kantha*, our friend. She also said that if it was possible she would make the necessary arrangements.

It took courage from our part to represent this matter to our husbands. I was nervous and afraid. When I spoke to *Prajwal*, to my astonishment, willingly, he agreed to send me. Finally, the day had come. A well-built wealthy young man clad with thick golden



Sch. Macwin (KAR)



chains, rings and glittering watch, came to take us to the East. With his words gentle and hands generous, he paid the salary in advance for next 3 months. We made the agreement to work under him for five years. Slowly, my life was filled with hope and darkness began to fade.

After tiresome journey, we five women reached our destination-*Bombay*. Initially let free, we went shopping, outing and relaxed ourselves. But finally, the day had come when a work was awaiting us in the garment factory. Ready and eager, we waited for the car to pick us. Our joys doubled all through the way as we dreamt of our bright future. The car stopped. We got down. The road had an awful stench. However, we were welcomed appropriately. Some women were fashionably dressed like the cut-outs we had seen in the big malls. They ushered us to some room and ordered us to wear short, shining and fashionable clothes. The makeup, jewels coupled with the fad-dress made me feel uncomfortable. Some women wished us well and some enquired whether we had done 'this' before. We were confused by what they meant. My instincts decried that something was fishy.

The 'this' they meant made us feel disgusted-'They ordered us to strip'. We had a big question whether it is a garment factory or a strip-club. One of the girls

raised her voice in protest, immediately she was brutally beaten to death by a thug. Now, I realized the quagmire we were stuck into and the kind of business we were sold into.

Survival wasn't easy, many died because of excruciating torture and mostly due to internal wounds. It was too late to escape because these oppressive wolves surrounded us. If anyone of us raised our voices, they would not hesitate to slit our throats because none of us were their mothers, sisters or wives.

They were waiting to sell us to various red light areas. Fear pervaded me, internally I felt helpless, defenceless, hopeless and lifeless. I was worn out and lost. I, then, realized that being a woman literally meant to be voiceless, fragile, vulnerable, weak and a puppet in the hands of the evil doers.

Lost and sinking deep into the abyss of flesh-trade, I contemplated death during those 'intimate' moments. Pained, filled with disgust and indignity, I was antipathetic to myself and waited for death, when the God-sent angels 'The CJI' team arrived to rescue me and many others from the clutches of this lustful monstrous trade. They showed me what true love and respect was, and gave me a sense of dignity. Now, I myself am a volunteer on rescue missions." concluded Seema with her face beaming with pride. ■



Earth, the Fountain of Life

I was astounded when I learnt there is no possibility of life on other planets of the solar system. I was quite disappointed because in my imagination I had a plethora of designs of how alien creatures will look. Moreover the stories of end times horrified me because I thought we could have no other planet to accommodate us anywhere. Later, I was glad when the scientist discovered earth-like planets in the Trappist System-II. It raised my curiosity but the doubt of life existing anywhere else was still there.

On earth, there are billions of creatures. I always wondered who designed them so uniquely. The biodiversity on earth makes it extraordinary. Moreover, I wonder who placed earth in the right place of the entire universe to accommodate life. Only because of the life, which the earth gives us we are able to unravel all these mysteries. If the earth did not accommodate life and intelligent beings like humans, nobody would be there to think of exploring the universe. It is because we achieved intelligence that we know who we are, how we are related to other creatures on earth. The creatures on earth have evolved in adapting to the present conditions of the earth. It is magnificent that earth has provided us enough.

Alas! We do not know how long our earth can sustain us. It is our duty to protect it because it is not certain whether we will discover another planet for us to survive. Even if we discover will we all



Sch. Agil (KAR)

be able to reach there and adapt to the living there. Another evolution must happen. We need earth because we have still not known life anywhere. We need earth to keep us alive to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Maybe we find another planet like earth but we must then remember that earth provided us the resources for all our discoveries. But, my heart still has questions. If there were intelligent beings elsewhere my questions are whether they would attempt to reach us. How would such beings appear to us? Do they breathe oxygen? Do they have religious beliefs as on earth?

These questions of early humans inspired them to write stories and movie scripts about aliens. Some of the stories and films are interesting. I believed these stories to be true when I was a child. Moreover, these stories and films motivate many scientists to explore the universe further.

Let us remember to protect earth, mother of all creatures. ■



Carlos Acutis : A Saint to Imitate

We all know the feeling: You're watching Netflix or reading a book only to discover some real-life story of an extraordinary young person who has achieved more than you could ever dream to. Whether it's a savant who made it to college before they legally could drive, or a world-famous musician in her early 20s, stories of extraordinary talent inspire (and sometimes confound) us. Carlos Acutis is one of those kinds of figures. He was a professional gamer who found his consolation in playing video games, surfing the web and creating Eucharistic database at an early age of 11 even when the vast majority of the kids never heard of programming languages.



Each one is a master piece of God's work. Carlo was a man of vision who was very much aware of his unique identity. "All people are born as originals, but most die

as photocopies." "Blessed Carlo Acutis preached this message as a call for people of all ages to never settle for mediocrity. Carlos did not rest in comfortable immobility", said Pope Francis. He grasped the needs of his time because he saw the face of Christ in the weakest. With his first savings he brought a sleeping bag for a homeless man when he was on the way to the Mass. He could have brought a gaming console instead he chose to be generous.



Sch. Tomy (KER)

The stories of saints are mostly stuffed with large hagiographies and an extraordinary account of their saintly life. Our Grandmas and aunts could carry prayer cards, medallions, devotional candles and take part in regular novenas to the popular saints. Carlos Acutis life has challenged the generational stereotypes against the only certain devotions rather than the young who are interested in using Novena apps, screensavers and also finding online spirituality. This popularity testifies how Catholic spirituality has been growing into the digital spaces. Young Catholics look up to saints for role models who blend conservationists' ideas and the



contemporary culture. Saints with bilocation and stigmata may seem less attractive but not who live the way of hipster Catholicism. As Pope Francis says, "To be saints is not a privilege for the few, but a vocation for everyone." Catholics have begun to embrace the possibility of saintly life in

their everyday life. Amid the Covid pandemic internet has been a place where religious and social lives meet. The internet now is no longer a neutral place but a platform for virtually reflecting the Catholic identity and Carlos' life is a perfect example for this. ■

Why did you choose this seat beside me?
I have a destination to reach.
This is my bus to take
And my seat of solace,
Why, why did you choose to disturb me?

You're young, I'm old
I envy you
For you have lessons from my failures
Your roots are everywhere
And you find me lingering around my unfortunate home
Which I have taught myself
As a place of serenity.

Rejection is a piece of cake for you
Got elegance to your company while you face it
Whereas I pound my walls with tears and desperation once despised.
You groom yourself in mud and dirt,
As if you've none to impress,
While I bathe, polish my table manners to finally fit in the men's world.

Here I live, fearing each uncertainty ahead,
Anxiety eating up my soul,
But you, you've exorcised fears forever,
I dare it would tremble at your sight.

I think I should stop.
I should sway my attention from you.
But I'm afraid,
That I'd never stop envying you.



Jealousy



Sch. Eby (KER)



He Never Leaves me Alone

I had a dream that I climbed the mountains. On reaching the half way, I got frightened and could no longer climb any further. The way became difficult and risky to go. As I looked down, the height was so deep that my phobia of height started frightening me. I lost all my hope, I could never see the beautiful place and I would never make in my life. My best friend came and told me, "Get up and we shall walk together. I never leave you alone."



Sch. Banri (KHM)

He loves me
More than he loves himself
I believe him
More than I believe myself
'Cause trust has tied us
With the thread of love.'

He walks with me
Even if he is tired
I listen to him
Even if I get bored
'Cause truth has joined us
With the spirit of life.'

He never leaves me
To suffer alone
I stand with him
In all his struggles
'Cause honesty has united us
With the key of faithfulness.'

He never allows me
To rest in the sorrow
I always pushed him
In the sea of possibility
'Cause joy has brought together
With the purified friendship.'

For friendship.
Everything.



COMMUNITY





ASHA KIRAN COMMUNITY 2020-21