

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Being merciful like the Father

The Jubilee Year of Mercy is a God-given opportunity for us to practice Christian virtue of forgiveness by showing mercy. Forgiveness is the consequence of mercy. Mercy is the extension of love towards any person. The generous love for the neighbour prompts us to show mercy



towards the one who is weak and vulnerable. We forgive the person when he or she repents and pleads for mercy because we believe that the person in his/ her weakness has done some wrong doing. Showing forgiveness and mercy is the characteristic of a true follower of Christ.

“Be merciful like the Father” (Lk.6.36) is the motto of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Because of his mercy God the Father 'sends his only Son to mankind'. The Father is ever merciful. He is ready to receive back 'the prodigal son'. He eagerly waits for the soul that has strayed away to repent and come back. The moment he finds the sinner repentant, He comes running to embrace and He celebrates the event.

The Son too has the same nature as that of the 'Father'. The Nazareth Manifesto narrates his nature of mercy – 'He has come to proclaim good news to the poor, to set the prisoners free, to give sight to the blind' (Luke 4.18-19). He shows mercy towards those who are suffering and neglected. He is so merciful looking at the vulnerable condition of the people that he offers to lay down his life for them. He is the 'Good Shepherd' in search of the lost sheep. He is terribly sad about the condition of the lost sheep, worried about the food, drink and life of the sheep. He looks incessantly for it until he finds it. His joy knows no bounds when he finds it. He simply lifts and puts it on his shoulders and brings it back. Jesus declares that there is great joy in heaven on a repentant sinner”. He is so merciful that he extends mercy even when

people have rejected him.

Every Christian is invited to experience this mercy of God and then extend mercy towards fellow brothers and sisters. The invitation is 'to be merciful like the Father'. The mercy of the Father is boundless it is beyond limits --- unlimited. We too have to imitate him. With tremendous attitude of mercy we should be ready to forgive seventy times seven (70x7=490), i.e., unlimited. We can never be tired of showing mercy. The occasions of mercy are beautifully explained in the eight beatitudes that Jesus gives (Mt 5.1-8). Therefore when we practice acts of mercy we are blessed. Then why wait?!!! Let us grab this golden opportunity of the Jubilee Year of Mercy to be blessed.

Fr Faustine L Lobo

National Director (PMS - INDIA)

Odisha Church urges CBCI to address Kandhamal

BHUBANESHWAR [mattersindia.com]: The Church in Odisha has appealed the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) to address Kandhamal issues at its plenary meeting scheduled for March 2016.

Kandhamal, a district in the eastern Indian state of Odisha, was the scene of the worst anti-Christian violence the country witnessed in its modern history.

The Odisha Church wants the bishops' national body to discuss the possibilities of observing Kandhamal Martyrs' Day at national level, initiating the canonization process for Kandhamal martyrs and putting up an exhibition on Kandhamal violence at the plenary venue.

The appeal was made in a December 10 letter that Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, the head of the Odisha Church, wrote to CBCI deputy secretary general Monsignor Joseph Chinnayyan. The Divine Word prelate said he was writing on behalf of the Odisha Catholic Bishops' Council. He also wants the plenary to allow 20 minutes for Kandhamal survivors to share their experiences.

Meanwhile a group of priests and lay people is preparing a detailed list of Kandhamal martyrs, according to the dates of their death, denomination or religion.

Born in a certain human context - I

[Excerpts from the Pope's address to participants in the Congress organized by the Congregation for the Clergy, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Conciliar Decrees *Optatam Totius* and *Presbyterorum Ordini*.]



This is not about a “historical recalling.” These two Decrees are a seed, which the Council sowed in the field of the life of the Church; in the course of these five decades they have grown, they have become a luxuriant plant, certainly with some dried leaves, but above all with so many flowers and fruits that embellish the Church today.

...*Optatam Totius* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* were recalled together, as the two halves of a single reality: the formation of priests, which we distinguish as initial and permanent, but which constitutes for them a unique experience of discipleship....

I would like to share some thoughts with you, beginning in fact from the relation between priests and other persons,

following n. 3 of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, in which is found something like a small compendium of theology of the priesthood, addressed in the Letter to the Hebrews: “Priests who are taken from among men and ordained for men in the things that belong to God in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, nevertheless live on earth with other men as brothers.”

Let us consider these three moments: “taken from among men”, “ordained for men,” present “with other men”.

The priest is a man that is born in a certain human context. There he learns the first values, absorbs the spirituality of the people, gets used to relationships. Priests also have a history; they are not “mushrooms” that appear suddenly in the Cathedral on the day of their Ordination.

It is important that formators and the priests themselves remember this and are able to take into account this personal history throughout the

path of formation. On the day of Ordination I always say to priests, to new priests: remember from where you were taken, from the flock, do not forget your mother and your grandmother! Paul said this to Timothy, and I also say it today. This means that one cannot be a priest thinking that one was formed in a laboratory, no. It begins in the family with the “tradition” of the faith and with all the experience of the family. The latter must be personalized, because it is the concrete person that is called to discipleship and to the priesthood, taking into account in every case that Christ is the only Teacher to follow and to whom one should configure oneself.

A good priest, therefore, is first of all a man with his own humanity, who knows his history, with its riches and its wounds, and who has learned to make peace with it, attaining in depth serenity, proper of a disciple of the Lord. Therefore, human formation is a necessity for priests, so that they learn not to let themselves be dominated by their limitations, but rather to put their talents to fruit.

A priest who is a tranquil man will be able to spread serenity

around him, also in difficult moments, transmitting the beauty of the relation with the Lord. Instead, it is not normal for a priest to be often sad, nervous or hard of character, it is not good and does not do good, neither to the priest nor to his people. However, if you have an illness, if you are neurotic, go to the doctor! To the spiritual doctor and to the clinical doctor: they will give you pills that will do you good, both will! But please, let not the faithful pay for the neurosis



of priests! Do not beat the faithful; have a heartfelt closeness to them.

We priests are apostles of joy, we proclaim the Gospel, namely, the “Good News” par excellence. It is certainly not us who give force to the Gospel – some believe this – but we can favor or set obstacles to the encounter between the Gospel and persons. Our humanity is the “clay vessel” in which we guard God's

(Continued on Page 22)

Becoming God's helpers in miracles

[Excerpts from Pope Francis' message for the 24th World Day of the Sick 2015]

I wish to propose a meditation on the Gospel account of the wedding feast of Cana (*Jn 2: 1-11*), where Jesus performed his first miracle through the intervention of his Mother. The theme chosen - *Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: "Do whatever he tells you"* (*Jn 2:5*) is quite fitting in light of the [Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy](#).

faith makes illness, pain, or the questions which they raise, disappear, but because it offers a key by which we can discover the deepest meaning of what we are experiencing; a key that helps us to see how illness can be the way to draw nearer to Jesus who walks at our side, weighed down by the Cross. And this key is given to us by Mary, our Mother, who has



Illness, above all grave illness, always places human existence in crisis and brings with it questions that dig deep. Our first response may at times be one of rebellion: Why has this happened to me? We can feel desperate, thinking that all is lost, that things no longer have meaning...

In these situations, faith in God is on the one hand tested, yet at the same time can reveal all of its positive resources. Not because

known this way at first hand.

At the wedding feast of Cana, Mary is the thoughtful woman who sees a serious problem for the spouses: the wine, the symbol of the joy of the feast, has run out. Mary recognizes the difficulty, in some way makes it her own, and acts swiftly and discreetly. She does not simply look on, much less spend time in finding fault, but rather, she turns to Jesus and presents him with the

concrete problem: “They have no wine” (*Jn* 2:3). And when Jesus tells her that it is not yet the time for him to reveal himself (cf. v. 4), she says to the servants: “Do whatever he tells you” (v. 5). Jesus then performs the miracle, turning water into wine, a wine that immediately appears to be the best of the whole celebration. What teaching can we draw from this mystery of the wedding feast of



Cana for the World Day of the Sick?

The wedding feast of Cana is an image of the Church: at the centre there is Jesus who in his mercy performs a sign; around him are the disciples, the first fruits of the new community; and beside Jesus and the disciples is Mary, the provident and prayerful Mother. Mary partakes of the joy of

ordinary people and helps it to increase; she intercedes with her Son on behalf of the spouses and all the invited guests. Nor does Jesus refuse the request of his Mother. How much hope there is in that event for all of us! We have a Mother with benevolent and watchful eyes, like her Son; a heart that is maternal and full of mercy, like him; hands that want to help, like the hands of Jesus who broke bread for those who were hungry, touched the sick and healed them. All this fills us with trust and opens our hearts to the grace and mercy of Christ.

At Cana the distinctive features of Jesus and his mission are clearly seen: he comes to the help of those in difficulty and need. Indeed, in the course of his messianic ministry he would heal many people of illnesses, infirmities and evil spirits, give sight to the blind, make the lame walk, restore health and dignity to lepers, raise the dead, and proclaim the good news to the poor (cf. *Lk*7:21-22). Mary's request at the wedding feast, suggested by the Holy Spirit to her maternal heart, clearly shows not only Jesus' messianic power but also his

mercy.

In Mary's concern we see reflected the tenderness of God. This same tenderness is present in the lives of all those persons who attend the sick and understand their needs, even the most imperceptible ones, because they look upon them with eyes full of love. How many times has a mother at the bedside of her sick child, or a child caring for an elderly parent, or a grandchild concerned for a grandparent, placed his or her prayer in the hands of Our Lady! For our loved ones who suffer because of illness we ask first for their health. ... But love animated by faith makes us ask for them something greater than physical health: we ask for peace, a serenity in life that comes from the heart and is God's gift, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, a gift which the Father never denies to those who ask him for it with trust.

In the scene of Cana, in addition to Jesus and his Mother, there are the "servants", whom she tells: "Do whatever he tells you" (*Jn2:5*). Naturally, the miracle takes place as the work of Christ; however, he wants to employ human assistance in performing

this miracle. He could have made the wine appear directly in the jars. But he wants to rely upon human cooperation, and so he asks the servants to fill them with water. How wonderful and pleasing to God it is to be servants of others! ... These unnamed people in the Gospel teach us a great deal. Not only do they obey, but they obey generously: they fill the jars to the brim (*cf. Jn 2:7*)...

n this World Day of the



Sick let us ask Jesus in his mercy, through the intercession of Mary, ... to grant to all of us this same readiness to be serve those in need, and, in particular, our infirm brothers and sisters. At times this service can be tiring and burdensome, yet we are certain that the Lord will surely turn our human efforts into something divine. We too can be hands, arms and hearts which help God to perform his miracles, so often

hidden. We too, whether healthy or sick, can offer up our toil and sufferings like the water which filled the jars at the wedding feast of Cana and was turned into the finest wine. By quietly helping those who suffer, as in illness itself, we take our daily cross upon our shoulders and follow the Master (cf. *Lk* 9:23). ...

If we can learn to obey the words of Mary, who says: “Do whatever he tells you”, Jesus will always change the water of our lives into precious wine. Thus this World Day of the Sick ... will help fulfil the hope which I expressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: ‘I trust that this Jubilee year

celebrating the mercy of God will foster an encounter with [Judaism and Islam] and with other noble religious traditions; may it open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; may it eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination’ (Misericordiae Vultus, 23). Every hospital and nursing home can be a visible sign and setting in which to promote the culture of encounter and peace, where the experience of illness and suffering, along with professional and fraternal assistance, helps to overcome every limitation and division. ...

Herbal garden named after Pope Francis

PUNE [mattersindia.com]: A green group in a Jesuit philosophy college in Pune has set up a herbal garden and named it after Pope Francis.

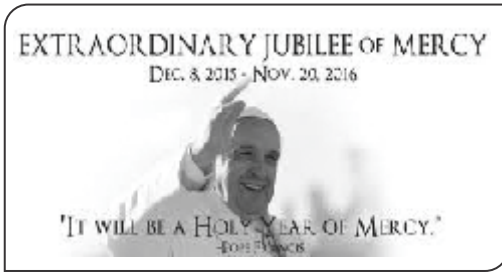
The Pope Francis Herbal Garden, started by the De Nobili College Tarumitra (friends of trees) Group on December 8, has some 70 varieties of medicinal plants.

The news about the garden drew the office in charge of the local police station who came to De Nobili to take advice to start a herbal garden in their station premises, said Father Edward Mudavassery, former head of Jesuits in South Asia now residing in Pune.

Jesuit Father Ted Bowling, who has been pioneering tree plantation in the campus, opened the garden in the presence of students, staff and a few guests, Father Mudavassery added.

Getting ready to forgive

By Dr Paul C Vitz



Why is it so hard to forgive? Certainly a major barrier is hatred, especially hatred between people. It is not difficult to find examples of hatred in the world today. All you have to do is to turn on the television to see how active and destructive hatred is in most cultures. This is just one of the reasons it is important to understand how to work through these barriers and strive to be forgiving.

A distinction should be made between anger and hatred, for they are not the same thing. Anger is a natural reaction to almost any actual or perceived attack, hurt, or threat. Anger is both the immediate emotional and behavioral response to such attacks and it is familiar to all. Hatred, by contrast, is not an immediate reaction, but depends

upon the cultivation of anger. This cultivation creates supporting cognitive structures that produce new anger and negative emotion long after the original reflexive anger. For present purposes, this kind of hatred will be restricted to interpersonal hatred, not in response of injustice or harmful social structures or of evil.

Unfortunately, there are many long-term consequences to hatred, and unending cycles of revenge is just one of them. For individuals, hatred in a way "pickles" a person, filling them with resentment, bitterness, and even depression. And of course it keeps people from doing anything positive with their life.

Is hatred a choice? As adults often it is. That is, we usually choose to hate or not. Often in the past we didn't choose the hatred that we have, for example hatred stemming from a childhood trauma. But as adults, sooner or later, we choose to keep

it or to let go of it. Through psychotherapy and counseling a person can confront their hatred. For example, a therapist will bring them to an awareness of how a person cultivated the hatred and of the possibility of letting it go. So what helps one let go of hatreds? One way to begin is to reflect on them. Especially to reflect on some of the hatred that is difficult to let go of. This is the point where the choice comes. There is now a possible choice to work at letting go or not. There is now the freedom to make this decision.

People certainly enjoy hatred, or it wouldn't be so popular in the world's literature, and on television and in movies today. In a temporary way, hatred makes you feel morally superior and gives you energy and purpose, but at the price of long-term debilitation. In many ways, interpersonal hatred is a kind of defense mechanism protecting our ego or our narcissism. One kind of "benefit" for holding onto the hatred is self-pity. But self-pity undermines our motivation. Hatred often leaks out and poisons relationships with those around us. Others don't want to let go of the hatred because they have a relationship with the

person they hate and in letting go, there would be emptiness in their life. Also, holding onto the hatred can protect one from being vulnerable to new relationships, a dubious benefit. Hatred also can shield one from painful memories. Some of these effects of hatred are short-term positives but it is not hard to see how these bring long-term negatives effects.

P r e s u m a b l y , a s



Christians, we all know that interpersonal hatred is wrong, and was explicitly rejected by Our Lord. We are called to love our enemies, not hate them, as difficult as this is. One good way to start overcoming hatred for your enemies is to pray for them. With prayer the other will no longer be all bad and you will not seem all good. Thus, praying for an enemy helps make them forgivable.

It is important to note however, that you cannot force someone into forgiveness.

Another may be able to suggest the notion, but ultimately the person must make the decision for themselves, otherwise the possibility of false or cheap forgiveness arrives.

Of course, a person may not have the freedom to stop hating in the sense of being able to easily let go of the structures formed over the years, but they do have the freedom to begin to stop hating,



Although the process can be difficult and requires sustained effort. And, as mentioned, with a reduction of hating comes the possibility of genuine forgiveness.

When a person forgives, they are giving away something of value, a debt or justice they are owed by the person. But, forgiveness is not excusing the person for what they did or

condoning the act. You cannot forget the act that was made, if you were truly hurt. With forgiveness, the obsessive memory of the act will decline. But forgiveness does not require reconciling with the person. Robert D. Enright and Richard P. Fitzgibbons, propose a definition of forgiveness as “people, upon rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right), and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love” (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the act or acts, has no right.)” (Enright, R., & Fitzgibbons, R. (2015). p.32.

Forgiveness therapy: An empirical guide for resolving anger and restoring hope (Washington, D.C). American Psychological Association Press.) For those who want a serious psychological treatment of forgiveness, I highly recommend their book. If we desire to be forgiving in this upcoming Year of Mercy, we must first work through the barriers to forgiveness.

Schedule of Year of Mercy



08 December 2015	Feast of Immaculate Conception and 50 years after the closing of the Vatican II. Opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica by Pope Francis and he will lead the way through the Holy Door, followed in procession by priests, religious, and laity, to the tomb of St. Peter. The opening ceremony will begin in St. Peter's Square, with readings from four documents of the Second Vatican Council: Dei Verbum, Lumen Gentium, Sacrosanctum Concilium, and Gaudium et Spes.
13 December 2015	Opening of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. John Lateran and in the cathedrals of the world.
01 January 2016	Opening of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Mary Major, - feast of Mary, the Holy Mother of God and World Day for Peace.
9 – 21 January	Jubilee for those involved with guiding or organizing pilgrimages and religious tourism
25 January	Opening of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.
02 February	Jubilee for Consecrated Life and the closing of the Year for Consecrated Life, feast of the Presentation of the Lord
10 February	Sending forth the Missionaries of Mercy, St. Peter's Basilica, Ash Wednesday.
22 February	Jubilee for the Roman Curia, feast of the Chair of St. Peter
04 March	24 Hours for the Lord™ with a penitential liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica
03 April	Jubilee for those who are devoted to the spirituality of Divine Mercy, Divine Mercy Sunday.
24 April	Jubilee for teens aged 13 to 16 to profess the faith and construct a culture of mercy
27 – 29 May	Jubilee for deacons, the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ
03 June	Jubilee for priests, feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
12 June	Jubilee for those who are ill and for persons with disabilities
26 – 31 July	Jubilee for youth, World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland.
04 September	Jubilee for workers and volunteers of mercy, the vigil of the memorial of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.
25 September	Jubilee for Catechists
08 – 09 October	Marian Jubilee
01 Nov	Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in memory of the faithful departed, feast of All Saints
06 November	Jubilee for prisoners
November 13	Closing of the Holy Doors in the basilicas of Rome and in the dioceses of the world
20 November	Closing of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica and the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy, feast of Christ the King
Every day	Every day during the Year of Mercy, the Rosary will be recited in St. Peter's Square.

Understanding the liturgy - III

The Presentations of Creed and the Lord's Prayer

Normally, the presentations of Creed and the Lord's Prayer take place during Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, after the first and third scrutinizes. But, for pastoral advantage, the presentations may be held during the period of catechumenate. Each of these



presentations is to be concluded with the ephphetha rite.

At the conclusion of the period of the catechumenate, a rite of sending the catechumens to their election by the bishop may be celebrated in parishes wherever this seems beneficial or desirable. This rite takes place after the homily. During this rite the catechumens are presented to be sent to the rite of election. The

By Fr Dr S Joseph Lionel
presentation of the candidates is followed by the affirmation by the godparents and the assembly. Then the community prays for the catechumens. After the intercessions, the celebrant with hands outstretched prays over the catechumens. If the Eucharist is celebrated after this rite, the candidates are gently dismissed at this point.

Election and Enrollment

The next step in the Christian Initiation is the rite called Election and Enrollment of names which closes the period of catechumenate proper.

The celebration of the rite of election usually coincides with the opening of Lent. It is a more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation. During this period the elect is encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity. From the day of their election and admission, the catechumens are called “the elect.” Normally it is celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent during Mass.

The Rite of Election and Enrollment of Names has the following structure: Liturgy of the Word, presentation of the candidates, affirmation by the godparents (and the assembly), invitation and enrollment of names, act of admission or election, intercessions for the elect, prayer over the elect, and dismissal of the elect.

1.1.3. The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

The third period in the RCIA is the period of purification and enlightenment. It coincides with the season of Lent; hence, the liturgical catechesis is a reminder of Baptism already received or the preparation for its reception. Therefore, for both the elect and the local Christian community, the Lenten season is a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the paschal mystery. This period consists in more interior reflection than in catechetical instruction. It is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Savior.

The scrutinies and presentations mark character of

this period. The celebration of the scrutinies and presentations brings about the process of purification and enlightenment and extends it over the course of the entire Lenten season. The scrutinies are celebrated on Sundays of Lent. They are reinforced by an exorcism. The scrutinies are celebrated to protect the elect from the power of sin and Satan and to give them strength in Christ who is the way truth and life. The



presentations take place after the celebration of scrutinies unless they are anticipated to the period of catechumenate due to some pastoral reasons.

The presentations of Creed and the Lord's Prayer follow the first and third scrutinies respectively. Thus, with the catechumenal formation of the elect completed, the Church lovingly entrusts to them the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

The Scrutinies and Presentations

The first scrutiny takes place on the third Sunday of Lent. The scrutiny is done after the homily. The texts and the readings for the Mass are those given for the first scrutiny in the Roman Missal and the Lectionary for Mass among the Ritual Masses. The structure for the first scrutiny is as follows: Liturgy of the Word, h o m i l y , invitation to



silent prayer, intercessions for the elect, exorcism, and dismissal of the elect. The presentation of the Creed takes place during the week after the first scrutiny (i.e. the third week of Lent). Preferably it should be celebrated in the presence of a community, within Mass after the homily.

The second scrutiny takes place on the fourth Sunday of Lent. The structure is same as the first scrutiny on the third Sunday of Lent. The third scrutiny takes place on the fifth Sunday of Lent. The presentation of the Lord's

Prayer takes place during the fifth week of Lent. During the Liturgy of the Word, after the first and the second reading, an assisting deacon or other minister invites the candidates to come forward to receive the Lord's Prayer. The gospel from Matthew 6:9-13 which mentions about Jesus

teaching the prayer to the apostles is read. In the homily, the meaning of the Lord's Prayer is explained.

There are some preparatory rites before the celebration of Baptism. Whenever the elect can be gathered on Holy Saturday so that they may dispose themselves by reconciliation and prayer to receive the sacraments, the preparatory rites are suitable.

The preparatory rites are:
1) recitation of the profession of faith, 2) rite of ephphetha (opening of ears and mouth), 3) the choosing of a Christian name, and 4) anointing with the oil of catechumens.

(To be continued)

SAINT OF THE MONTH - 1

St Kuriakose Elias Chavara

10-02-1805 - 03-01-1871

Feast day: 03 January

Kuriakose Elias Chavara was born on 10 February 1805 at Kainakary, Kerala in a Nasrani Christian family as the son of Iko (Kuriakose) Chavara and Mariam Thoppil. Nasranis are St. Thomas Christians (also known as Syrian Christians) who are the ancient Christians of Kerala baptized by St. Thomas the Apostle in the first century.

In his childhood, Kuriakose attended the village school. There he studied language and elementary sciences. He entered the seminary in 1818 in Pallipuram where Palackal Thomas Malpan was the Rector. He was ordained a priest on 29 November 1829

In 1831, co-operating with Fr Thomas Palackal and Fr Thomas Porukara, he founded the first indigenous religious congregation for men, now known as the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI). It was after the death of his senior companions in the foundation that Fr. Kuriakose, together with the first members, made the religious profession in 1855. In religion he



took the name, Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family.

Starting seven religious houses, including the first one at Mannanam, in different parts of Kerala, the new Congregation made great strides in the spiritual renovation of the Syro-Malabar Church. Seminaries for the education and formation of the clergy, introduction of annual retreats for priests and people, a publishing house for the propagation of Catholic doctrine, a house for the dying and destitute, special attention to catechumens and schools for general education, were a few among the various activities of the Congregation under Fr. Kuriakose Elias' leadership.

Fr Chavara also introduced

valuable improvements and reform in the Syro-Malabar liturgy. In 1866, with the cooperation of Fr. Leopold Boccaro OCD, he started the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) for women. When a schism threatened the Church in 1861, Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the then Vicar General of the Syro-Malabar Church, took a strong stand and gave effective leadership in thwarting Thomas Roccas' intrusion and saving the Church in Kerala from schism.

Kuriakose Elias Chavara was also a social reformer. Though he hailed from an upper caste Syrian Christian family, he played a major role in educating the people of the lower ranks of society. As Vicar General he made every parish open a school so that free education can be imparted to all the children. He also introduced midday meal so that the poor children could get at least one wholesome meal a day.

Fr Chavara has also written a number of books in prose as well as in verse with unique spiritual vision. His counsel to the Christian families given in the form of the 'Testament of a Loving Father' is applicable and relevant to this day. Essentially a man of

prayer and intense charity, he lived in close communion with the Lord amidst his several religious and social activities. Owing to his deep spirituality that permeated all his actions, he was accepted and referred to as a man of God, from his early years.

In 1871, on January 3rd, Fr Kuriakose Elias Chavara, after a short but painful illness, passed away at Koonammavu preserving his baptismal innocence unto death. He was buried at St. Philomena's Church first later his mortal remains were transferred from Koonammavu to Mannanam in 1889 and has been reinterred in St Joseph's Monastery Church at Mannanam.

On 7 April 1984, Pope John Paul II solemnly recognized the heroic virtues of the Servant of God and elevated him to the status of Venerable. On 8 February 1986, during his historic visit to Kottayam, Kerala, Pope John Paul II raised Venerable Kuriakose Elias Chavara to the honours of the altar declaring him 'Blessed'. Pope Francis canonized Bl. Chavara on 23 November 2014.

Source: www.syromalabarchurch.in/saints; **Wikipedia**; **Netikat, Antony: Saints for Everyday**

St Brigid of Ireland

450 – 525



Brigid was born out of wedlock, the daughter of a pagan chieftain named Dubthach and a Christian slave woman named Broicsech. The chieftain sold the child's pregnant mother to a new master, but contracted for Brigid to be returned to him eventually.

According to de Blacam, the child was probably baptized as an infant and raised as a Catholic by her mother. Thus, she was well-formed in the faith before leaving Broicsech's slave-quarters, at around age 10, to live with Dubthach and his wife.

Within the new circumstances of the chieftain's household, Brigid's faith found expression in feats of charity. From the

Feast Day: 01 February

abundance of her father's food and possessions, she gave generously to the poor.

Dubthach became enraged, threatening to sell Brigid – who was not recognized as a full family member, but worked as a household servant – to the King of Leinster. But the Christian king understood Brigid's acts of charity and convinced Dubthach to grant his daughter her freedom.

Released from servitude, Brigid was expected to marry. But she had other plans, which involved serving God in consecrated life. She even disfigured her own face, marring her beauty in order to dissuade suitors.

Understanding he could not change her mind, Dubthach granted Brigid permission to pursue her plan, and material means by which to do so. Thus did a pagan nobleman, through this gift to his illegitimate daughter, play an unintentional but immense part in God's plan for Ireland.

While consecrated

religious life was part of the Irish Church before Brigid's time, it had not yet developed the systematic character seen in other parts of the Christian world by the fifth century.

Among women, vows of celibacy were often lived out in an impromptu manner, in the circumstances of everyday life or with the aid of particular benefactors. Brigid, with an initial group of seven companions, is credited with organizing communal consecrated religious life for women in Ireland.

Bishop Mel of Ardagh – St Patrick's nephew, and later “St Mel” – accepted Brigid's profession as a nun.

According to tradition, the disfigurement she had inflicted on her face disappeared that day, and her beauty returned. St Mel went on to serve as a mentor to the group during their time at Ardagh.

Brigid's life as a nun was rooted in prayer, but it also involved substantial manual labor: cloth making, dairy farming, and raising sheep.

In Ireland, as in many other regions of the Christian

world, this communal combination of work and prayer attracted vast numbers of people during the sixth century. Kildare, however, was unique as the only known Irish “double monastery”: it included a separately-housed men's community, led by the bishop Saint Conleth.

Under Brigid's leadership, Kildare played a major role in the successful Christianization of Ireland.

The abbess' influence was felt in the subsequent era of the Irish Church, a time when the country became known for its many monasteries and their intellectual achievements.

St Brigid of Kildare died around 525. She is said to have received the last sacraments from a priest, Saint Ninnidh, whose vocation she had encouraged.

Veneration of Brigid grew in the centuries after her death, and spread outside of Ireland through the work of the country's monastic missionaries.

Source: www.catholicnewsagency.com; Nettikat Antony: Saints for Everyday

Bible Quiz No. 26

This Quiz is based on the book of Psalms 21- 40. We have used the RSV edition for formulating the questions, but you may use any Catholic edition of the Bible.

Study the Bible
with us



There are 20 questions. The answer to each question must necessarily cite the Scripture reference. Please do not write out the questions; just write the question number, your answer and the Scripture reference (For format, see the answers to Quiz No. 25 below)

All our readers/members of a family, young and old, are welcome to participate in the quiz individually. Please write your full name, complete postal address and telephone (landline/mobile) number.

You can post/courier your entries to the Editor, Proclaim, Pontifical Mission Organization, 10 Ulsoor Road, Bangalore 560042, or email them to < proclaim@pmsindia.net >. All entries must reach us by *31 January 2016*.

Five correct entries will be rewarded with one-year subscription of *Proclaim*. If there are more than 5 correct entries, the winners will be selected by lot.

01. What will the Lord do when He appears after He finds out all His enemies who hate Him?
02. What does the Psalmist feel about the bulls of Bashan sounding him with open mouths?
03. To whom shall the posterity proclaim God's deliverance?
04. What does the Lord prepare for the Psalmist in the presence of his enemies?
05. Who shall ascend the hill and stand in the holy place of the Lord?
06. What does the Lord make known to those who fear him and are his friends?
07. Whose company does the Psalmist hate and wouldn't sit with them?
08. What does the Psalmist ask of the Lord and want to seek after?

09. Why does the Psalmist want the Lord to requite those who do evil and render them their due reward?
10. Which cedars are broken at the voice of the Lord and what happens to it?
11. Why has the Lord loosed Psalmist's sackcloth and girded him with gladness?
12. What should happen to the lying lips which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt?
13. Why does the Psalmist instruct his reader not to be like a horse or a mule without understanding?
14. What must one do to be radiant and not to be ashamed?
15. What should happen to those who rejoice at the Psalmist's calamity and magnify themselves against him?
16. What extends to the heavens and to the clouds?
17. If the wicked are cut off, what will happen to those who wait for the Lord?
18. What has the Psalmist not seen right from his childhood to his old age?
19. Why do the wounds of the Psalmist grow foul and fester?
20. What has the Psalmist not concealed from the great congregation?

Answers to Quiz No. 25

(All the references are from the Book of Psalms.)

(1) yields fruit in its season, and its leaf doesn't wither, 1:3; (2) serve the Lord with fear, 2:11; (3) Deliverance belongs to the Lord, 3:8; (4) when their grain and wine abound, 4:7; (5) open sepulcher, 5:9; (6) grows weak, 6:7; (7) is pregnant with mischief and brings forth lies, 7:14; (8) by the mouths of babes and infants, 8:2; (9) to Sheol, 9:17; (10) thou wilt not call to account, 10:13; (11) coals and brimstone, 11:16; (12) when the poor are despised and needy groan, 12:5; (13) there is no God, 14:1; (14) multiply their sorrows, 16:4; (15) from his temple, 18:6; (16) the channels of the sea were seen and the foundations of the world laid bare, 18:15; (17) like hind's feet, 18:33; (18) comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy, 19:5;

(19) is sure, making wise the simple, 19:7; (20) the name of the Lord our God, 20:7

Winners of Quiz No. 25

Anil Serrao, Mangalore; Christina C, Bhadravati; Jose M C, Kozhikode; Juliana Rodrigues, Pune; Sunita Rajesh, Delhi

(Continued from Page 4)

treasure, a vessel that we must look after, to transmit well its precious content.

A priest cannot lose his roots; he always remains a man of the people and of the culture that generated him. Our roots help us to remember who we are and where Christ has called us. We priests do not fall from on high, but we are called, called by God, who takes us from “among men” to ordain us “for men.” Allow me an anecdote.



In the diocese, years ago ... Not in the diocese, no, in the Society, there was a good priest, good, young, a priest for two years. He became confused, spoke with the

Spiritual Father, with his Superiors, with doctors and said: “I’m going, I can’t anymore, I’m going.” And thinking of these things – I knew his mother, humble people – I said to him: “Why don’t you go to your mother and speak to her about this?” He went, spent the whole day with his mother, and returned changed. His mother gave him two spiritual “slaps,” told him three or four truths, put him in his place, and he went forward. Why? --because he went to the root. Therefore, it is important not to remove the root from where we come. One must engage in mental prayer in the Seminary ... Yes, certainly, this must be done, learn But first of all pray as your mother taught you, and then go ahead. But the root is always there, the root of the family, as you learned to pray as a child, also with the same words, begin to pray like that. Then you will go forward in prayer.

STORY

'Your enemy has died!'



One day all the employees reached the office and saw a big advice written on the door.

“Yesterday the person who has been stopping your growth in this company passed away. You are invited to join the funeral.”

In the beginning, they got sad for the death of one of their colleagues, but after a while they got curious to know who the man was who stopped their growth.

Everyone thought: 'Well, at least the man who stopped my progress died!'

One by one the thrilled employees got closer to the coffin, and when they looked inside they were speechless. They stood shocked in silence, as if someone had touched the deepest part of their soul. There was a mirror inside the coffin and everyone who

looked inside could see him/herself.

There was a sign next to the mirror that read: "There is only one person who is capable to set limits to your growth...It is you. You are the only person who can influence your happiness, success and realization.”



Your life does not change when your boss, friend or company changes.....your life changes when you change...you go beyond your limiting beliefs and you realize you are the only one responsible for your life.

It's the way you face life that makes the difference!

If an egg is broken from outside force....life ends but if it is broken from inside force life begins. Great things always begin from our inside.

Christian slums in Pak threatened with demolition

Islamabad [UCAN]: Pakistani church leaders and rights activists have denounced government plans to demolish dozens of Christian-majority slums in Islamabad.

In a report submitted to the Supreme Court, the Capital Development Authority said the slums represented a threat to the numerical superiority of Muslims in the capital city.

"It is necessary to identify the fact that most of the katchi abadis (slums) are under the occupation of the Christian community," the report said.

"It seems this pace of occupation of land by [the] Christian community may increase. Removal of katchi abadis is very urgent to provide [a] better environment to the citizen[s] of Islamabad and to protect the beauty of Islam," the report said, according to Al Jazeera.

Father Yousif Amanat, of Our Lady of Fatima Church in Islamabad, said: "The (authority's) response to the Christian slums clearly reflects the motives behind the so-called anti-encroachment drive. This is simply persecution of religious minorities on the basis of their faith."

Christians acquitted of proselytizing

Hyderabad [UCAN]: A court in Karnataka has acquitted eight Christians, who were accused of forcibly converting a Hindu and were in jail for the last eight years.

The Christian men, arrested in 2007, were accused of proselytizing their Hindu neighbors, going from door to door in Balya village of the state.

The court ordered the release of T Sebastian, K Varghese, M Thomas, S Babu, V Baby, T Joseph, T James and T Alexander.

"This is a victory not only for the eight innocent Christians, but for the entire Christian community," Sajan George, president of the Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC), said.

George said that many Christians in Karnataka receive threats and harassment frequently by Hindu right-wing extremists who "disrupt their prayers in private homes and blame them for alleged forced conversions."

India is currently No. 21 on Open Doors' World Watch list, which ranks the most difficult countries in which to be a Christian.