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PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation



**Lent is a time of
fasting + prayer**

"Go into the whole world and PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS to all creation" Mark 16:15

Do you want them to think...



and work as “Little Missionaries”?



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PROCLAIM

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**“Keep watch and
pray, all of you,
so that you may
not slip into
temptation.”**

– Mark14:38

It's time we repented our sins against nature

Pope Francis in his last Apostolic Letter 'Laudato Si' warns, "We are dirtying AND ruining our common home in a sad and violent manner." He says 'We are' and not 'they are'! You and I are destroying the precious nature which we are enjoying because our ancestors have not destroyed it or degraded it by interfering with the natural order. Are we realizing this? It is as if we make the entire water that is available salty and then we are thirsty for water. We have water but we are not able to drink because we have already polluted it!

We are denying the next generation their right to live. Is it not sinful to deprive others of what is their due? We because of our selfishness are destroying 'our common home', the habitat for the next generation of people, animals and the plants. The best gift that we can leave behind to the next generation is an unadulterated, beautiful nature. We are into a mission of spoiling this gift to the maximum extent possible and planning to hand it over to the progeny where they will be suffocated 'to live', or rather I should say suffocated 'to die'.

The natural resources are described as 5 Ja's in Hindi --- Jal (Water), Jameen (Soil), Jangle (Trees), Jaanvar (Animals) and Jan (People). The first four are for the fifth. If 'the four' are protected 'the fifth' can survive as "Jan' depends totally on the other four Ja's for survival. Today 'You' and 'I' for our selfish gains are destroying the four natural resources indiscriminately unmindful of what is going to happen to us. We are on the road of destroying ourselves and our future by destroying the nature.

Lent is a call for METANOIA --- a complete change of heart, conversion- right about turn. It is changing our direction from our journey towards destruction to salvation. Shall we think of 'Metanoia' during this lent from 'destruction' to 'protection' of nature, from degradation to conservation of natural resources. Let us first understand the enormity of the tragedy and the urgency to restore. The pollution of water, air, soil are irreversible and the destruction of flora and fauna is done alarmingly faster leading to global warming, changes in seasons. The world order, the balance in the universe, is distributed. The damage is reaching a point from where there is no return.

May this Lent be an occasion for us to live the 'good news' of preserving the nature and we shall commit ourselves to work with God, the Creator, in preserving the nature to its original pristine purity. The mandate for every Christian is to 'love the neighbour'. We shall follow it by endeavoring to protect the nature. We shall express our love to our neighbours of today and generation to come by joining hands in this mission of nature lovers. Therefore, stop cutting trees; instead plant one; don't expose soil to sun and rain, rather protect by mulching; stop polluting water but use only as much as required; stop burning anything, much less of the plastic material, and breathe fresh air.

May our *Metanoia* be total and let us prepare ourselves to meet the Risen Lord by contributing to save the life of others by way of creating a safe dwelling place for all here on earth. The Lord will be pleased to invite us with Him to the abode of the Father.



Fr Faustine L Lobo
National Director (PMO – India)

The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift

[Below is the Vatican-provided full text of the Pope's Message for Lent 2017.]

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God “with all their hearts” (*Joel* 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. *Homily*, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. *Lk* 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called *Lazarus*: a name full of promise, which literally means “*God helps*”. This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. *Homily*, 8 January 2016).



Lazarus teaches us that *other persons are a gift*. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbor or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.

Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called “a rich man”. His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. *Jer* 10:9) and kings (cf. *Jg* 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: “He feasted sumptuously every day” (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the

corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. *Homily*, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that “the love of money is the root of all evils” (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55). Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man's greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. *ibid.*, 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: “No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money” (Mt 6:24).

The Word is a gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday

invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”. As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that “we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls “father” (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God's people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: “During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony” (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life's evils are balanced

by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: “They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them” (v. 29). Countering the rich man's objections, he adds: “If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead” (v. 31).

The rich man's real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was *the failure to heed God's word*. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting



REND YOUR HEARTS!

(A short reflection on Lent put together from different sources.)

By Mahesh H Lobo

A story is told of a man, who while driving a car met with a terrible accident. A few people soon gathered at the place of the accident and came forward to offer him immediate help that he needed. But the man said, “Oh! There's nothing wrong with me.”

“But sir, you've just been in a terrible car accident. You're bleeding and have some deep bruises. There may be internal damage!” someone from the crowd said.

But the man said again, “There's nothing wrong with me!”

Another man then suggested, “At least have a doctor check you out, sir. We have an ambulance right here – it wouldn't take very long.”

But the man again insisted, “I told you, there's nothing wrong with me!” And he walked away from the car accident.

After this, his wife, when she heard of her husband's accident, came there, picked him up and drove him home. Later, he died from internal bleeding.

'There's nothing wrong with me' can be a dangerous statement to make. Spiritually, it is probably the worst thing a person could possibly say. For a person to stand before God and say, *'There's nothing wrong with me'* – that's incompatible with Christianity, and unacceptable to God. Human being is sinful and there is always something wrong with them. So, a true Christian is someone who humbly stands before God and says, *“Be merciful, O Lord, for I have sinned.”*

Lent is a time in the Liturgical Calendar of the Church earmarked specifically to look out and to look in. That is, a time to look at the Cross – to walk with and accompany Jesus in his journey to Jerusalem and be with Him at the Last Supper, Garden of Gethsemane, at the courts of Caiaphas, Annas and Pilate. Then walk up to Calvary at the site of Crucifixion. Finally accompany the women to the tomb to experience the glorious Resurrection.



At the same time it is also an occasion to look inward, realize and recognize what we are and like the publican, bend our head in humility and say: “Lord, have mercy on me, I am a sinner.” It is this aspect that is stressed on Ash Wednesday as we begin the Holy Season of Lent. The ashes symbolize our mortality, the fact that one day we will depart from this life. At the end of the day, our time here on earth is very short. The traditional Christian view of things describes our earthly life as a pilgrimage through a foreign land, a period of exile which lasts until we reach our true home and our true destiny: life in complete communion with God himself.

The other aspect of Ash Wednesday follows on from that. Our life on earth isn't only a pilgrimage towards that goal; it's a preparation for it. God is available to us now, not just in the future. He calls us into friendship with him now. Since the time is short, Prophet Joel invites us to “come back to me with all your heart with fasting and weeping and mourning”.

Three aspects are stressed during this period of Lent, namely, prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Jesus reminds his followers of how important it is to *pray*, how important it is to open our minds and our hearts to God and put our relationship with him on a stronger footing.

Sometimes we can fall into the habit of



thinking that prayer is something we've *got* to do - it's a way of paying our dues to God, and we'll be judged negatively by him if we *don't* pray. Whereas what we've got to remember about prayer is that it's not something we do for God's sake or to benefit God. It's something we do for *our* sake, and it benefits *us*.

The more we get into the habit of praying regularly, turning to God and asking him for his presence and his help, or asking him to look after other people in some way, the more we're opening ourselves to God's influence on us, and the more we become like God. Prayer has that effect on us when we persevere over time. It brings us close to God and it makes us like God. And that has a sort of knock-on effect, as we become a focus of God's Reign among the people we come into contact with.

Christ mentions ***fasting***: not only the idea of giving up food, or eating less - although that is an important spiritual practice in itself - but more generally having an element of self-denial and sacrifice in our spiritual life, partly for the sake of discipline and self-control, but mainly to help us remove our attachment to the things that interfere with us having a greater attachment to God.

"Then," Jesus says, when you do these things, "your Father, who sees what you do in secret, will reward you".

On Fasting, St. John Chrysostom says:

- "Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see a friend being honoured, do not envy him.
- Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

- Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful. Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip. Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism.
- For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?

May He who came to the world to save sinners, strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us."

Jesus recommends ***almsgiving***: in its most general sense, caring for other people, setting aside some of our own time or money or any other resource that we might have, especially for those suffering hardship of any kind.

The idea behind almsgiving is that it gives us a simple, practical way, as it were, of carrying out God's will and making up for the fact that we're not perfectly holy. We might be lacking in all sorts of qualities of character but at least we can always find ways of showing a bit of generosity to people.

As mentioned earlier, the season of Lent is a time for us to walk with Jesus. It also has a place in the overall narrative of Jesus' life: At Epiphany, we commemorated his appearance to his people, and realized that he is the light that scatters our darkness. At his baptism, he was revealed to be the Son of God, bearing divine favour for the people. At the reception of John's baptism, he identified himself with the faithful remnant of Israel, and began to reconstitute the nation in terms of loyalty to himself by his calling of the Twelve; now enter the story of the last days of his ministry, when he began to orient himself and his disciples to his



...Continued on Page 18

SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

Historical Background – I

By Fr Dr Joseph Lionel

The Sacrament of Eucharist receives center place in the Christian Liturgy. In the previous issue I explained the biblical background for this sacrament. The importance given to the Eucharist in the early Church continued its vigor during the patristic period, and also the subsequent centuries. In spite of persecutions the believers did not cease to gather for the Eucharistic celebrations.

1. Mention of Eucharist outside of the New Testament

Around the year 112 AD, Trajan was the emperor of Rome and Pliny the younger was the governor of the province of Pontus and Bithynia. Pliny sent a report to Emperor Trajan about the Christians. In that report he mentions, “These people habitually assemble on a set day, before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as to a god... They then go their ways and assemble again later on for their meal which, whatever may be said of it, is ordinary and harmless.” Since Pliny was a pagan who did not understand the background of the whole gathering, the reporting itself is somewhat baffling. However one could make a reasonable redaction that Pliny was referring to Sunday when he wrote about a set day. And the two gatherings may refer to Eucharist.

Another important source outside the New Testament is Didache. It is a compilation of several documents and may date back to the end of first century and beginning of second century. Didache says, “On the dominical day of the Lord, come together to break bread and give thanks, after having, in addition, confessed your sins so that

your sacrifice may be pure. But let anyone who is at odds with his fellow not join with you until he has first been reconciled, lest your sacrifice be profaned. For here is what the Lord says: 'In every place and at all times let them offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the nations.'” The sense that Didache conveys goes in conformity with the New Testament passages that deal with Eucharist. The breaking of the bread, gathering on the Lord's Day, and sacrificial nature are indicated. The mention of confession of sins presupposes penitential prayer as we find in contemporary writings.

In about the same period of the history, St. Ignatius of Antioch provides first explicit testimony to the role of the bishop who presides over the Eucharist as he does over the Church. His presiding shows the unity of the community to be signified by Eucharist that is its source. “The only Eucharist to be considered legitimate is the one celebrated under the presidency of the Bishop or of someone he has appointed.” “Be careful to take part in only one Eucharist; for there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, one cup that unites us to his blood, and one altar, just as there is but one bishop with his presbytery and deacons.”

2. Eucharist in the Second Century

In the middle of the second century St. Justin wrote a little treatise known as the First Apology. St. Justin addressed this to Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD). In this treatise, chapter 65 describes Eucharistic liturgy proper after description of baptismal rite and chapter 67 describes about Sunday assembly.

On the day named after the sun, all who live in city or countryside assemble in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as time allows. When the lector (anaginoskon) has finished, the president (hoproestos) addresses us and exhorts us to imitate the splendid things we have heard. Then we all stand and pray. As we said earlier, when we





have finished praying, bread, wine and water are brought up. The president then prays and gives thanks according to his ability (hose dynamis). And the people give their assent with an 'Amen!' Next, the gifts which have been 'eucharistified' (eucharistethenton) are distributed, and every one shares in them, while they are also sent via the deacons to the absent brethren (Chapter 67).

From this we could observe that Mass proceeds in accordance with fundamental structure that has lasted to our present time: the assembly; the Liturgy of the Word with readings, homily and prayer of the faithful; the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the bringing up of bread and wine, a consecratory thanksgiving and communion. One could also observe that Eucharist was no longer being celebrated within the framework of a meal; this change occurred at a very early stage. Already during the second century we could see more organized structure of the Eucharistic assembly. The Eucharistic assembly was the sign of the Church. It is not only assembling but living the identity or bearing witness by life. Sharing fraternal communion was an essential trait of this unique identity as Justin points out, "The wealthy who are willing make contributions, each as he pleases, and the collection is deposited with the president, who aids orphans and widows, those who are in want because of sickness or some other reason, those in prison, and visiting strangers-in short, he takes care of all in need."

3. Subsequent Developments

During the fourth and fifth centuries, several historical and theological factors contributed towards regulation in the use of texts during liturgy giving rise to liturgical books in the subsequent periods. Among various reasons, the growing number of heresies and poor quality of prayers composed by priests and bishops were the most compelling rationale for the codification of the liturgical texts. Such codification offered advantage over oral transmission of texts used for worship. The orthodoxy was defined through well formulated liturgical texts. Christian leaders felt the need to check the content of the orations used during liturgy.

For example, St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo complained against the quality of clergy's improvisation and protested certain bishops who used the p r a y e r s

composed by incompetent authors and heretics. Some African synods during the same period forbade the use of liturgical formularies which were not approved by the synods. From the fourth and fifth centuries the intervention of local synods became evident leading to slow emergence of uniform texts in prayer. Nevertheless, this uniformity remained within the regions. This trend towards uniformity produced two results: (1) preserving orthodoxy in the teaching of the Church and (2) maintaining good quality of prayers used in the liturgy. ♦

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28 Catholic pastoral workers killed in 2016

Twenty-eight pastoral workers were killed in 2016, according to Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The 28 include 14 priests, nine sisters, a seminarian, and four laity. The majority were killed during armed robberies.

Twelve were killed in the Americas, eight in Africa, seven in Asia, and one --- Father Jacques Hamel, who was slain while celebrating Mass in Europe. ♦

----- *Catholic World News*

Fidelity and perseverance: intertwined responsibilities

[Here is the Vatican-provided translation of Pope Francis' address to participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life "on Saturday, 30 January 2017, in the Vatican.]"

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is for me a cause for joy to be able to receive you today, as you are gathered in the plenary session to reflect on the theme of faithfulness and abandonment. I greet the Cardinal Prefect and thank him for his words of presentation; and I greet you all, expressing my gratitude for your work in the service of the consecrated life of the Church.

The theme you have chosen is important. We can say that at this moment faithfulness is put to the test; the statistics you have examined show this. We are facing a “haemorrhage” that weakens consecrated life and the very life of the Church. The abandonment of consecrated life worries us. It is true that some leave as an act of coherence, because they recognise after serious discernment that they never had this vocation; however, others, with the passage of time, have less fidelity, very often many years after their perpetual vows. What has happened?

As you have noted, there are many factors that condition faithfulness in this, a change of era and not merely an era of change, in which it becomes difficult to take on serious and definitive commitments. A bishop told me, some time ago, that a good boy with a university degree who worked in the parish came to him and said, “I want to become a priest, but for ten years”. The culture of the temporary.

The first factor that does not help maintain faithfulness is the social and cultural context in which we move. We live immersed in the so-called culture of fragmentation, of the temporary, which leads us to live in an “à la carte” way, as slaves to fashion. This culture introduces the need always to have “side doors” open onto other possibilities, feeds consumerism and forgets the beauty of the simple and austere life, very often causing a great existential emptiness. There has also been the spread of a strong practical relativism, according to



which everything is judged in relation to a self-realisation that is at times far removed from the values of the Gospel. We live in a society in which economic rules substitute moral ones, dictate the laws and impose systems of reference at the expense of the values of life; a society where the dictatorship of money and profit advocates a vision of existence in which those who are not productive are discarded. In this situation, it is clear that one must first let oneself be evangelised in order to engage in evangelisation.

To this factor of the socio-cultural context, others must be added. One of these is the world of youth, a world that is complex yet at the same time rich and challenging. Not negative, but complex, yes, rich and challenging. There is no lack of young people who are very generous, united and committed at religious and social level; young people who seek a true spiritual life; young people who hunger for something different to what the world offers them. There are marvellous young people, and not just a few. But there are also young people who are victims of the logic of worldliness, which may be summarised as follows: the search for success at any price, easy money and easy pleasure. This logic also seduces many young people. Our task cannot be other than that of staying close to them to spread to them the joy of the Gospel and of belonging to Christ. This culture must be evangelised if we do not want young people to succumb.



A third conditioning factor comes from within consecrated life itself, where alongside much holiness – there is much holiness in consecrated life! – there is no lack of situations of counter-testimony that make faithfulness difficult. Such situations, among others, are: routine, weariness, the burden of managing structures, internal divisions, the search for power, or “climbers”, a worldly way of governing institutes, a service of authority that sometimes becomes authoritarianism and sometimes “laissez-faire”. If consecrated life is to maintain its prophetic mission and its appeal, continuing to be a school of faithfulness for those near and far, it must keep its freshness and the novelty of the centrality Jesus, maintain the attraction of spirituality and the strength of mission, show the beauty of following Christ, and radiate hope and joy. Hope and joy. This shows us how a community fares, what it has inside. Is there hope, is there joy? Good. But when there is less hope and there is no joy, things are bad.

An aspect that must be cared for in a particular way is fraternal life in the community. This must be nurtured through prayer in the community, prayerful reading of the Word, active participation in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, fraternal dialogue and sincere communication between all members, fraternal correction, mercy towards the brother or sister who sins, and the sharing of responsibilities. All this must be accompanied by an eloquent and joyful witness of simple life alongside the poor and by a mission that favours the existential peripheries. The renewal of fraternal life is essential for the

result of vocational pastoral care, being able to say “Come and you will see” (cf. John, 1:39), and for the perseverance of brothers and sisters, both young and less young. Because, when a brother or a sister does not find support for consecrated life within the community, he or she will seek it elsewhere, with all that this entails.

The vocation, like faith itself, is a treasure that we carry in vessels of clay (cf. Cor. 4:7); therefore, we must safeguard it, as we safeguard the most precious things, so that no-one robs us of this treasure, and so it does not lose its beauty over time. This care is a task for every one of us who is called to follow Christ more closely with faith, hope and charity, cultivated every day in prayer and strengthened by a good theological and spiritual formation, which defends against the



fashions and culture of the ephemeral and enables us to journey steadfast in faith. On this basis it is possible to practice the evangelical counsels and to have the same sentiments as Christ. The vocation is a gift that we have received from the Lord, Who looked upon us and loved us (cf. Mark, 10:21), calling us to follow Him in consecrated life, and is at the same time a responsibility for those who have received this gift. With the Lord's

grace, each one of us is called to take on responsibly, in the first person, the task of one's own human, spiritual and intellectual growth, and at the same time, to keep alive the flame of the vocation. This means that we in turn must keep our gaze fixed on the Lord, always being careful to journey according to the logic of the Gospel, and not to give in to the criteria of worldliness. Very often great infidelities are born of minor deviations and distractions. In this case too it is important to take on board St. Paul's exhortation: “the hour has come for you to wake from sleep” (Romans, 13:11).

Speaking of faithfulness and abandonment, we must accord great importance to accompaniment. And I would like to underline



this. Consecrated life must invest in preparing guides who are qualified for this ministry. And I say consecrated life, because the charism of spiritual accompaniment, let us say spiritual direction, is a “lay” charism. Priests have it too, but it is a lay charism. Very often I have found sisters who said to me, “Father, do you know a priest I can turn to?” “But, tell me, in your community isn't there a wise woman, a woman of God?” “Yes, there is that old lady who ... but ...” “Go to her!”. Take care of the members of your congregation. In the previous Plenary you noted this need, as is shown also in your recent document “New wine in new wineskins”. You can never overstate this need. It is difficult to remain faithful when walking alone, or walking with the guidance of brothers and sisters who are not capable of listening carefully and patiently, or who do not have adequate experience of consecrated life. We need brothers and sisters who are experts in the ways of God, to be able to do what Jesus did with the disciples of Emmaus: to accompany them on the journey of life and at the moment of disorientation, and to rekindle faith and hope in them through the Word and the Eucharist (cf. Luke, 24: 13-35). This is the delicate and demanding task of a guide. Numerous vocations

are lost due to a lack of valid guidance. All consecrated persons, young or less so, are in need of adequate help for the human, spiritual and vocational moment we are experiencing. Although we must avoid any form of accompaniment that creates dependencies. This is important: spiritual accompaniment must not create dependencies. Although we must avoid any kind of accompaniment that creates dependencies, that protects, controls or infantilises, we cannot resign ourselves to journeying alone; there is a need for close, frequent and fully adult accompaniment. All this will help ensure the continuous discernment that leads to discovering God's will, to finding in everything what most pleases the Lord, as St. Ignatius would say, or – with the words of St. Francis of Assisi, “always to want what pleases Him”. Discernment requires, on the part of the guide or the person accompanied, a fine spiritual sensibility, to be able to place oneself before the other *sine proprio*, with complete detachment from prejudices and personal or group interests. Moreover, it is necessary to remember that discernment is not simply a question of choosing between good or bad, but between good and better, between what is good and what leads to identification with Christ. And I would continue to speak, but we will finish here.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you again and invoke upon you and your service as members and collaborators of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life the continual help of the Holy Spirit, and bless you wholeheartedly. Thank you. ♦

New Bishop appointed for Mysore

Pope Francis has appointed Fr K Antony William as the new Bishop of Mysore in place of Bishop Thomas Vazhapilly who resigned from the pastoral care of the diocese on attaining the retirement age.

Bishop-elect Fr William is currently Parish Priest of St Joseph's Church in Jayalakshimpuram, and also the Secretary of the Mysore Diocesan Educational Society. After his priestly ordination on May 18, 1993 in the Diocese of Mysore, he served in the parishes of Thomayarpalayam and Martallias as Assistant Parish Priest and the parishes of Gundlupet, Hinkal and Mysore Cathedral as Parish Priest.

He was the Financial Administrator and Chancellor of the Diocese of Mysore during 2003-2009. Since 2015, he has been the Parish Priest of St Joseph's Church in Jayalakshimpuram, and Secretary of the Mysore Diocesan Educational Society. He is a member of the Diocesan College of Consultors, of the Diocesan Financial Council and of the Mysore Diocesan Society, as well as the Diocesan Public Relation Officer and the Defender of Bond at the Diocesan Tribunal. ♦

--- UCANINDIA

Source of water waiting to gush forth

[Below is a working ZENIT translation of Pope Francis' prepared address to the participants in the Congress promoted by the National Office for the Pastoral of Vocations of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI), on the theme "Arise, Go Forth and Fear Not. Vocations and Sanctity: I Am on a Mission" (Rome, January 3-5, 2017).]



Dear Brothers and Sisters!

At the end of your Congress on vocational pastoral care, organized by the Office of the Italian Episcopal Conference, I am happy to be able to receive you and meet with you. I thank Monsignor Galantino for his courteous words and I congratulate you for the commitment with which you carried forward this annual appointment, in which the joy of fraternity and the beauty of the different vocations is shared.

Opening before us is the horizon and path towards the Synodal Assembly of 2018, on the theme "*Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*." The total and generous "Yes" of a dedicated life is similar to a source of water, hidden for a long time in the depth of the earth, which waits to gush forth and flow outside, in a rivulet of purity and freshness. Young people today are in need of a source of fresh water to quench themselves and then continue on their path of search. "Young people have the desire of a great life. The encounter with Christ, letting oneself be gripped and guided by His love, widens the horizon of existence and gives a solid hope that does not disappoint" (Encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, 53).

Your service, with its style of vocational proclamation and accompaniment is also placed on this horizon. Such a commitment requires *passion and a sense of gratuitousness*. The passion of personal involvement, in being able to take care of the lives that are assigned to you, as cases that enclose a precious treasure to be protected, and the

gratuitousness of a service and ministry in the Church that calls for great respect of those of whom you are companions on the way. It is the commitment to seek their happiness, and this goes well beyond your preferences and expectations. I make my own Pope Benedict XVI's words: "Be sowers of trust and hope. Profound, in fact, is the sense of loss that today's youth often lives. Not rarely, human words are deprived of future and prospect, deprived also of meaning and wisdom. [...] Yet, this can be the hour of God" (*Address to the participants in the European Congress on Vocational Pastoral Care*, July 4, 2009).

To be credible and to be attuned to young people, it is necessary to favor the way of listening, of being able to "lose time" in taking up their questions and desires. Your testimony will be all the more persuasive if you are able to tell with joy and truth the beauty, the astonishment and wonder of being in love with God, of being men and women who live with gratitude their choice of life to help others and leave an unheard of and original mark in history. This requires not being disorientated by external solicitations, but entrusting oneself to the mercy and tenderness of the Lord reviving the fidelity to our choices and the freshness of our "first love" (cf. *Revelation* 2:5).

The priority of the vocational proclamation is not the efficiency of what we do, but rather the privileged attention we give to



vigilance and discernment. It is to have a look that is able to gush positivity in the human and spiritual events we meet; an astonished and grateful heart in face of the gifts that individuals bear in themselves, putting in the light their potentialities more than their limitations, the present and the future in continuity with the past.

Today, there is need of a vocational pastoral of wide horizons and of the breath of communion, capable of reading the reality as it is with courage, with the efforts and resistances, recognizing the signs of generosity and of beauty of the human heart. There is the urgency to bring back within Christian communities a new “vocational culture.” ‘The capacity to dream and to have great desires, the astonishment that enables one to appreciate beauty and to choose it for its intrinsic value, because it renders life good and true, is also a part of this vocational culture’ (Pontifical Work for Vocations, *New Vocations for a New Europe*, December 8, 1997, 13B).

Dear brothers and sisters do not tire of repeating to yourselves: “*I am a mission*” and not simply “*I have a mission.*” ‘It is necessary to recognize oneself as marked by the fire of such a mission to illumine, bless, vivify, relieve, heal and liberate’ (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 273). To be on permanent mission

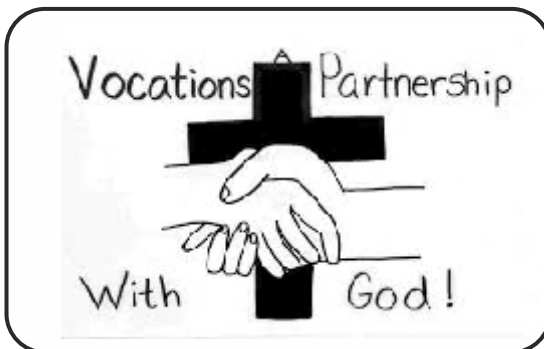
requires courage, audacity, imagination and the desire to go beyond, of going further. In fact, “*Arise, go and fear not*” was the theme of your Congress. This helps you to remember the many

vocation stories in which the Lord invited those called to go out of themselves to be a gift for others; He entrusts a mission to them and assures them: “*Fear not, for I am with you*’ (Isaiah 41:10). His blessing gives constant and impassioned encouragement to be able

to go beyond the fears that shut one in on oneself and paralyze every desire of the good. It is good to know that the Lord takes charge of our frailty, puts us back on our feet to rediscover, day after day, the infinite patience to begin again.

Let us feel ourselves spurred by the Holy Spirit to identify with courage new ways in the proclamation of the Gospel of vocation, to be men and women that, as watchmen (cf. *Psalms* 130:6), are able to receive the rays of light of a new dawn, in a renewed experience of faith and of passion for the Church and for the Kingdom of God. May the Spirit push us to be capable of a loving patience, which does not fear the inevitable slowness and resistances of the human heart.

I assure you of my prayer, and you, please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you. ♦



110 crosses in Mumbai may be termed heritage structures

Over 110 Christian crosses in the city have been proposed to be considered heritage structures, in a meeting held by the Heritage Review Committee on Thursday.

The review meeting was attended by members of Watchdog Foundation, Bombay East Indian Association and Saint John the Baptist Church Save Committee.

The members of the above organisations claimed that these cross structures are over 120 years old and thus should be declared heritage structures. Four Christian crosses in Bandra have been declared as Grade 1 heritage structures in the past.

The members also raised the issue of declaring 189 Gaonthans and 40 Koliwadadas across the city as heritage structures because they are being tagged as slums by the state government.

A senior member from Watchdog foundation said, “These areas are centuries old and represent the culture of a particular community so we should preserve it.” ♦

--- UCANINDIA

SAINT OF THE MONTH – I

St Frances of Rome

1384 – 1440

Feast Day: 09 March

Frances was born in the city of Rome in 1384 to a wealthy, noble family. From her mother she inherited a quiet manner and a pious devotion to God. From her father, however, she inherited a strong will. She decided at eleven that she knew what God wanted for her -- she was going to be a nun. But her father deciding otherwise, she was forced to marry a Roman noble, Lorenzo Ponziani. Her mother-in-law loved parties and entertaining guests. She wanted the young bride to join her which Frances disliked. She fell seriously ill. She wanted to die in order to escape this worldly extravaganza. During this time St Alexis appeared to her and helped her to choose God's will. She regained her health miraculously. But her problems didn't disappear as her mother-in-law wanted her to accompany her to parties. Vannoza, her sister-in-law, would dress up, playing cards, and would go round happily. Mother-in-law wanted Frances to be like her sister-in-law.

One day Vannoza found Frances crying bitterly in the garden. When Frances poured out her heart to Vannoza and it turned out that this sister-in-law had wanted to live a life devoted to the Lord too. What Frances had written off as frivolity was just Vannoza's natural easy-going and joyful manner. They became close friends and worked out a program of devout practices and services to work together. They spent hours together in prayer as well as went around city helping the poor.

At seventeen, Frances gave birth to her first son, John Baptist; and shortly afterwards her mother-in-law died. Frances was then placed in charge of the household; and she carried out her duties, not only efficiently, but also in a genuinely Christian manner. Later she gave birth to a daughter and a son.

During a famine she gave away corn to the poor so lavishly that her husband began to object. When he went to the empty granary, however, he found it miraculously filled with forty measures of



wheat "so shining and so full...that it seemed as though it had been raised in Paradise and reaped thee by angels..." Similar thing happened to the wine casket which was completely empty but was found miraculously filled by the prayers of Frances. At this, her father-in-law exclaimed: "Oh, my dear child, dispose henceforward of everything I possess, and multiply without end those alms that have gained you such favor in God's sight!"

Rome was invaded in 1410; and during the civil war which followed, a series of calamities befell the Ponziani family. Lorenzo, who fought with the papal troops, was wounded; and after Frances had nursed him to health, he went back to the war. John Baptist, the oldest son, was taken hostage, and did not return until peace was restored. A plague followed in the wake of the war, and Frances' second son and a daughter died of the disease.



Frances by then had gathered some women who wanted to devote themselves to charity. She along with them served those stricken by the plague. For a time she too was stricken by the plague, but after she was suddenly cured she at once resumed her works of charity.

After Lorenzo's death, Frances' second son appeared to her and brought her an archangel to take the place of her guardian angel. The archangel's light was visible to her so that she could read by it. When she committed a slight fault, the archangel would hide himself, and his light

would not shine again until she had made an act of contrition.

In 1425, Frances had her companions clothed as oblates of St Benedict. This apparently did not cancel her membership in the Third Order; for, at this time she and Vanozza made a pilgrimage to Assisi, walking the one hundred miles from Rome to the city of St Francis. Near Assisi St Francis himself appeared to them, and provided the hungry and thirsty pilgrims with fresh, juicy pears by striking a wild pear tree with his stick.

Later Frances suddenly became ill and was taken back to the Ponziani palace. There she died after seven days, on March 9, 1440.

Pope Paul V canonized Frances in 1608. Her tomb is beneath the high altar in the crypt of the Roman church which is now called Santa Francesca Romana in her honor. She is honored as the principal patron of all Benedictine oblates, but she is also one of the greatest saints who wore the habit of the Third Order of St Francis. ♦

Source: www.catholic.org/saints/;

www.franciscanmedia.org/; www.roman-catholic-saints.com/; www.newadvent.com

Continued from Page 4: The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift

**MAKE
LENT
COUNT**
PRAY · ACT · GIVE

hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favor the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter. ♦

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St John Baptist de la Salle

1651 – 1719

Feast Day: 07 April

John Baptist de la Salle, educational pioneer, founder of the world-wide Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, commonly called the Christian Brothers, was born in the cathedral town of Rheims, France, on April 30, 1651. His parents were people of standing, his father holding a judicial post. From childhood he gave evidence of such unusual piety that he was designated for the priesthood. At eleven he received the tonsure and at sixteen became a canon of the cathedral chapter at Rheims. Later he was sent to the seminary of St. Sulpice to complete his studies. The young canon, handsome in appearance and scholarly in his tastes, seemed destined for high ecclesiastical preferment. Soon after his return to Rheims he was to discover his true life work—the education of the poor. It was to be a long, hard struggle, with few tangible rewards, but he unquestionably started a movement which was to result in furthering free elementary instruction.

At that time a few people lived in luxury, but most of the people were extremely poor: peasants in the country, and slum dwellers in the towns. Only a few could send their children to school; most children had little hope for the future. Moved by the plight of the poor who seemed so “far from salvation” either in this world or the next,



he determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the service of the children “often left to themselves and badly brought up.” To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, renounced his position as Canon and his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

His enterprise met with opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities who resisted the creation of a new form of religious life, a community of consecrated laymen to conduct gratuitous schools “together and by association.” The educational establishment resented his innovative methods and his insistence on gratuity for all, regardless of whether they could afford to pay. Nevertheless De La Salle and his Brothers succeeded in creating a network of quality schools throughout France that featured instruction in the vernacular, students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents. He was one of the first to emphasize classroom teaching over individual instruction. He also began teaching in the vernacular instead of in Latin.



Bible Quiz - 33

Compiled by Mahesh H Lobo

This Quiz is based on the Book of *Sirach* (*Ecclesiasticus*), Chapters 01 – 15. We have used the RSV edition for formulating the questions, but you may use any Catholic edition of the Bible.

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. 32 below)

All our readers/members of a family, young and old, are welcome to participate in the quiz individually. Kindly mention your full name, complete postal address and telephone (landline / mobile) number. You can post/courier /email your entries to the address provided on page 1. All entries must reach us by *30 March 2017*.

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

01. When was wisdom and prudent understanding created?
02. What will the patient man hide until the right moment?
03. If gold is tested in the fire, how are acceptable men tested by the Lord?
04. One who honours his father atones for sins; what happens to him who glorifies his mother?
05. Why doesn't the affliction of the proud have no healing?
06. If Wisdom is known through one's speech, what about education?
07. Can one truly depend on dishonest wealth he has gathered for himself?
08. One should not trust a friend hastily. Then how must one gain a good friend?
09. Who will find a faithful friend who is an elixir of life?
10. What must one do if one sees an intelligent man?
11. Why should one humble oneself greatly?
12. What must one do if one has children?
13. Why should one not quarrel with the rich?
14. What must be the attitude of the one who lends anything to a man who is stronger than oneself?
15. According to the author of the book of Sirach, who should be your dinner companions?
16. Having cast down the thrones of the rulers, what has the Lord done instead?
17. What happens to the enemies of a man when he prospers?
18. What will be the end result if a clay pot associates itself with a iron kettle?
19. When a rich man totters, friends steady him. What will be the situation if a humble man falls?
20. Why shouldn't one blame the Lord and say: it is he who led me astray?

Study the Bible
with us



Answers to Quiz No. 32

All the references are from the Book of Wisdom

(01) because no secret word is without result and a lying mouth destroys the soul, 1:11; (02) will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries, 2:18; (03) they will perish, 3:16; (04) the one who pleased God and loved by him, 4:10; (05) chaff and light hoarfrost, 5:14; (06) will search out your works and inquire into your plans, 6:3; (07) because of her pureness, 7:24; (08) in judgment and rulers shall admire it, 8:11; (09) wisdom, 10:1; (10) delivered from a nation of oppressors, 10:15; (11) multitude of irrational animals to punish them, 11:15; (12) experience the deserved judgment of God, 12:26; (13) because he did the work, and named the perishable thing as god, 14:8; (14) through the vanity of men, their speedy end has been planned, 14:14; (15) swear wicked oaths and expect to suffer no harm, 14:29; (16) when he makes from earthy matter fragile vessels and graven images, 15:13; (17) from heaven, bread ready to eat, 16:20; (18) surrender of the helps that come from reason; 17:12; (19) when their first born were destroyed, 18:13; (20) pursued those whom they had begged and compelled to depart, 19:3

Winners of Quiz No. 32

Arathi, Chennai; Helen Rosario, Chetpet, T.N.; Matthai K. A., Hyderabad; Roseline Nirmal, Mysuru; Sujatha Mattoo, Jammu;

Continued from Page 6: Rend your hearts!

vocation of suffering and death for the sake of the people.

The story has taken a dark turn, and we join the Master as he sets his face resolutely toward Jerusalem. In solidarity with him, we begin the time of sorrowing for our sins and his suffering, walking into the darkness of our broken humanity in the hope of Easter's light.

So the matter of Lenten disciplines or practices is this: what can I do to set my own face toward Jerusalem? What in my personality and my life with the Church in the world needs to be put to death and what does God wish to be raised up? I think we find the answers to these questions by putting ourselves in an intentional posture of listening: making a quiet space in our routines to hear from the Lord. ♦

Continued from Page 16: Saint of the Month - II

In addition, De La Salle pioneered in programs for training lay teachers, Sunday courses for working young men, and one of the first institutions in France for the care of delinquents. John Baptist de La Salle was a pioneer in founding training colleges for teachers, reform schools for delinquents, technical schools, and secondary schools for modern languages, arts, and sciences. His work quickly spread through France and, after his death, continued to spread across the globe.

Worn out by austerities and exhausting labours, he died at Saint Yon near Rouen early in 1719 on Good Friday, only weeks before his sixty-eighth birthday. John Baptist de La Salle inspired others how to teach and care for young people, how

to meet failure and frailty with compassion, how to affirm, strengthen and heal.

In 1900 John Baptist de La Salle was declared a Saint. Because of his life and inspirational writings, he was made Patron Saint of all those who work in the field of education on 15 May 1950 by Pius XII. The spirit of de la Salle has even permeated other religious families either in giving them a special character or in suggesting their rules. Many other congregations came up around the world inspired by this great saint and dedicated themselves towards the education of children and youth. ♦

Source: www.lasalle.org/en/; www.catholic.org/saints/; www.newadvent.org/; www.ewtn.com

Bible Puzzle – 7

Compiled by Mahesh H Lobo

All are welcome to participate in the Bible Puzzle individually. While sending your entries, kindly provide your full name, complete postal address and telephone (landline / mobile) number.

You may post/courier / email your entries to the address provided on Page 1. All entries must reach us by *31 March 2017*.

There are 20 names of individuals that are found in the Acts of the Apostles hidden in this puzzle. Spot them. Kindly see answers to Puzzle No. 6 as an example for the way to solve this puzzle. One correct answer will get a prize. If there is more than one correct entry, the winner will be decided by lots.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
A	D	S	O	L	L	O	P	A	X	B	A	G	H
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Z	X	I	C	S	U	B	A	G	A	I	U	S	M
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
Y	O	P	V	S	T	E	P	H	E	N	L	F	E
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56
Q	R	B	S	A	T	U	Y	O	T	S	P	E	Z
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
A	A	C	A	N	D	A	C	E	U	I	D	D	F
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84
A	P	P	I	R	G	A	K	L	L	I	B	X	E
85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
L	S	M	A	T	T	H	I	A	S	C	C	A	S
99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112
L	A	E	A	V	F	H	X	S	T	A	M	M	T
113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126
I	N	M	S	A	P	D	O	R	A	K	W	D	U
127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140
C	A	T	R	O	I	W	G	L	O	L	Q	W	S
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154
S	U	P	E	E	M	F	I	B	O	N	I	M	Q
155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168
I	X	H	R	G	L	U	A	P	I	M	O	S	Z
169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182
R	T	D	C	F	Q	G	M	A	N	A	E	N	E
183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196
P	A	R	B	A	R	N	A	B	B	A	S	W	X

Answer to Bible Puzzle No. 6

Andrew: 34, 49, 64, 79, 94, 109

Bartholomew: 141, 128, 115, 102, 89, 76, 63, 50, 37, 24, 11

James: 112, 125, 138, 151, 164

James: 91, 92, 93, 94, 95

John: 91, 76, 61, 46
Martha: 169, 156, 143, 130, 117, 104
Mary: 2, 17, 32, 47
Matthew: 138, 124, 110, 96, 82, 68, 54
Matthias: 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192
Paul: 4, 17, 30, 43
Philip: 107, 122, 137, 152, 167, 182
Salome: 139, 125, 111, 97, 83, 69
Simon Peter: 172, 159, 146, 133, 120, 107, 94, 81, 68, 55
Simon: 176, 177, 178, 179, 180
Thaddaeus: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Thomas: 101, 116, 131, 146, 161, 176

(NB: The answer JOHN was not considered as there was an error from our end)

Winner of Bible Puzzle 6

Jasmine, H.N.Pura, Hassan

Bombay auxiliary bishops consecrated

Some 10,000 Catholics assembled on the grounds of Don Bosco School on Jan 28 to watch Fr Allwyn D'Silva and Fr Barthol Barretto consecrated auxiliary bishops of Bombay by Cardinal Oswald Gracias.

The appointments were announced by Pope Francis on December 20. Both Fr Allwyn and Fr Barthol are grassroots workers who have earned the respect and love of their people.

Both will continue to serve their respective parishes at St John the Baptist Church, Thane, and Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, Borivli, until May 31.

Fr Nigel Barrett, spokesman of the archdiocese of Bombay, said, "Cardinal Gracias was principal consecrator at the ceremony while Bishop Bosco Penha and archbishop Vincent Concessao were co-consecrators. We hosted 10 bishops from the western region. Around 10,000 faithful arrived not just from Thane and Borivli but from places where Fr Allwyn and Fr Barthol have served previously."

Fr Allwyn with 21 years of work in Mumbai's slums is a champion of environmental causes. He is secretary of the FABC Climate Change Desk. His chosen motto is 'Care for Creation'. His parishioners hired 12 buses to reach the venue Saturday.

Parishioners of I C Church and neighbouring localities led a caravan of 19 buses to cheer Fr Barthol Barretto. Born September 16, 1961, Fr Barthol studied at St Michael's School, Mahim, and went on to graduate in history.

"I am grateful to God for giving me this fresh opportunity to serve the people. More so, my parishioners and the people of our archdiocese are happy and pleased. My chosen motto is 'Love in Action'," said Fr Barthol. Once he leaves Borivli in May, his people will be sorry to lose the priest with "golden heart and silver hair."♦

Source: Times of India

Little Juggler of Our Lady

by Maria Becker



Young Barnaby was a juggler. That was his profession, and he was quite good at it. His father before him had been a juggler, and so had his grandpa.

His father had taught him how to juggle and how to dance, how to tumble and how to sing. Barnaby had loved to watch his father performing in the streets of Paris, and there were times when they were very merry together.



In those days, they had even travelled the land together, amusing people high and low. Sometimes they juggled in the market places, sometimes in local fairs. But their best days were when they performed for special feast days and weddings. Then people were most generous and showered copper and silver coins on their little worn rug.

But when Barnaby was about ten years old, something very sad happened — his father died.

Now, you can imagine how terrible that was to young Barnaby. But Barnaby was a brave little fellow, and life had to go on. And, he now had to earn his own bread every day. He would continue to do as his father had taught him, wherever he was welcome.

So, he gathered up the little treasures his father had left him — his two sticks, a couple of hoops, some brightly coloured balls, and some apples. These he wrapped up in the old rug, which

he strapped to his shoulders like a turtle's shell. Then he set off to find some work.

On His Own

He set out every morning for the town, spread out his rug and leaped, danced, and juggled as best as he knew how. People stopped to watch his tricks, and laughed and smiled. Young as Barnaby was, he had been taught his trade very well indeed.

While spring flowered into summer, Barnaby tramped all over the countryside to earn his daily bread. The sky was his roof at night, and during the day people were kind to him.



All went well until winter began to creep in. The warm breezes turned into chilly blasts, and fewer and fewer people stopped to watch the little juggler on his mat.

People hugged their warm cloaks and hurried past Barnaby without even a glance. His little purse of coins grew thinner and thinner until, at last, it was totally empty.

One day, Barnaby sat shivering and lonely at the foot of a big oak tree, trying in vain to keep back his tears. Snowflakes fell all around him in silent piles, and the cold seemed to freeze even his thoughts.

Just then, he heard a muffled step and, looking up, saw a monk looking down at him.

“Where is your home, young boy?” he

asked Barnaby kindly.

Barnaby stared down at his frozen toes and shook his head miserably.

“Would you like to come with me?” the monk asked him. “Come, you will be warm.”



So it happened that Barnaby found a new home. For the next few weeks, he was kept warm and well-fed in the abbey kitchen.

Now Christmas was fast approaching. The monks were preparing gifts to present to the Infant Jesus and His Mother on Christmas Eve and were very busy.

Brother John was composing a new chant as a gift, for which Brother Matthew was writing lyrics. Brother James was carving a gorgeous new manger, and Brother Juniper polished the altar candlesticks until they gleamed like the sun. Other monks were working on beautiful manuscripts, and still others painted lovely frescoes for the little abbey chapel which enthroned a statue of Our Lady and the Christ Child.

Barnaby, watching the monks as they worked, grew increasingly sad. “Oh, how worthless I am,” he cried to himself, “What right have I to stay here in this abbey when I don't know how to do anything useful? I don't even know how to pray right!” With these sad thoughts, he hung his head and cried.

Sweet Virgin, Watch me!

One day, while the monks were attending Mass in the abbey church, Barnaby knelt in the chapel and stared up at the statue. “Oh, sweet Virgin,” he sighed, “how can I serve you as do the others?” Suddenly, the bells of the church began to peel and great lovely waves of sound filled the air.

Barnaby jumped up in excitement. “Oh!” he cried, “I know what I can do for you, Blessed Mother. Watch me!!

He spread his thin rug on the floor before the statue. Then he laid out his two sticks, his hoops, his balls, and his apples. He gave a deep

bow, then suddenly began to leap and tumble in the air. He gave great somersaults, forward, backward, and sideways. He grabbed his sticks and hoops and tossed them in the air at all angles. He juggled the balls and apples in a great rainbow of colours, behind his back and under his feet. He dropped to his hands and lifted his feet in the air, then leaped and somersaulted happily again.

At last, half an hour and many tumbles later, the little juggler collapsed in a heap at the feet of the statue.

“Oh, sweet Lady, I have given you my best performance. I don't know how to do the things the monks do, but I shall come here every day while they are at prayer and juggle for you and your Son.”

Many days passed, and Barnaby spent many an hour tumbling and somersaulting for the Mother and Child. Of course, after a while, the brothers began to wonder what he was doing so secretly while they prayed.

Barnaby's Secret Discovered

When Christmas was but two days away, Brother James decided to discover what it was that Barnaby did in the chapel by himself. He quietly followed the boy and peeked through a crack in the door. He was amazed at what he saw!! There was Barnaby grinning from ear to ear, juggling merrily before the statue.



“Why, this is scandalous!” exclaimed the monk to himself. “While we are tending to our souls, this little fool is capering about like a little goat in our chapel! I must inform the Abbot!” And he did.

The Abbot, however, was a good and wise man and never made ill judgments of people without proof or reason. “Now, now,” he said to Brother James, “do not act hastily. Let me see the boy for myself. Next time he begins his juggling, call me without telling anyone else.”

The next night was Christmas Eve. All the

monks presented their gifts to the Blessed Mother and the Infant Jesus, and Barnaby thought he had never seen such a beautiful array of works!

“Oh, sweet Mother,” he sighed, “how I wish I had something as exquisite to offer you.”

When the ceremony was over and the monks had all returned to their cells, Barnaby stole softly back to the chapel. He thought himself alone, but there were two sets of eyes following his every move from behind the confessional in the dark side of the chapel. Barnaby laid out his rug and bowed low before the statue. The Abbot and Brother James stared as he tumbled merrily from step to step, standing first on his hands, then on one foot, then on the other. He danced and juggled as he had never before done in his life, for this night was the birthday of the Christ Child and he wanted to do his best for his Infant God.

It was a lovely and lively performance, and at last he dropped to the ground, exhausted and gasping.

The Miracle

Suddenly, the Abbot's and the monk's eyes almost popped from their sockets. They watched in awe as a dazzling Lady descended daintily from the niche where the statue stood.

Her robes shimmered with precious stones,

diamonds, and sapphires. The air around her vibrated with the hum of angelic voices.

She drew close to the prostrate little juggler and wiped his brow with a silken handkerchief.

She blew softly on his hot little face, then bent down and kissed it gently. Before anyone could stir a hair, she returned to the niche above the steps.

On Christmas day the Father Abbot called for the little juggler. Barnaby went to him trembling, thinking, “Surely he has found me out and is going to send me away for tumbling in the chapel.” But, to his great surprise, the Abbot hugged him and said: “Barnaby, my son, do you wish to stay here at the monastery with us?”

“Oh, yes, Sir!,” answered the boy all aglow.

“Then we want you to stay also. But from now on, you must tumble for Our Blessed Lady and the Christ Child openly and no longer in secret. I believe they like your tumbling very well.” ♦

courtesy: www.americanneedsfatima.org



Cardinal Gracias re-elected to head Latin rite bishops

Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay has been re-elected to head of Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), the forum of Latin rite bishops in India, for another term of two years Feb. 6.

However, other top officers, vice president Archbishop Philipe Neri Ferrao of Goa and secretary general Bishop Varghese Chakkalakal of Calicut were replaced. Archbishop George Antonysamy of Madras - Mylapore is new vice president and Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto of Delhi is new secretary general.

The re-election of Cardinal Gracias was unanimous decision of more than 130 bishops attending the 29th plenary of the bishops in Bhopal, said CCBI spokesperson. Cardinal Gracias is also the president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences as well as the Archbishop of Bombay.

Archbishop Antonysamy has served in the Vatican embassies in Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone and was in charge of d'Affaires of the Vatican Embassy in Jordan. In 2012 he was appointed the sixth archbishop of Madras-Mylapore archdiocese.

Archbishop Couto began his episcopal career as the auxiliary bishop of Delhi. He was then transferred to Jalandhar as its second bishop in 2007. He became the Delhi archbishop in 2012. The newly elected office bearers were installed at a ceremony moderated by Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara of Nagpur. ♦

--- UCANINDIA

NEWS ROUND-UP

Changanassery gets new auxiliary bishop

The synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church has elected Fr Thomas Tharayil (Tomy) as auxiliary bishop of the Changanassery archdiocese.

The announcement was made on Jan 14 simultaneously at Mount St Thomas, headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church, at 4.30 pm, and Vatican at 12 noon (corresponding time).

The appointment order was read out by Major Archiepiscopal Chancellor Fr Antony Kollannur. Syro-Malabar Church head Cardinal Mar George Alencherry handed over the order to Fr Thomas.

Archbishop of Changanassery Mar Joseph Perumthottam presented the bishop-elect with the insignia of episcopacy, while Archbishop Emeritus of Changanassery Joseph Powathil felicitated him with a bouquet.

All the bishops attending the synod were present at the function. Earlier, the bishop-elect had been serving as director of the Danahalaya Institute of Formation at Punnapra, Alappuzha.

A holder of Doctorate in Psychology from the Gregorian University, Rome, the bishop-elect is a well-known retreat preacher and psychologist. He has taught at various major seminaries and institutes, and has written books and articles on Psychology. Besides his mother tongue Malayalam, the bishop-elect is proficient in English, German, Italian and Spanish.

His previous pastoral assignments include Assistant Parish Priest at Athirampuzha, Nedumkunnam and Edathua; and Vicar Administrator at the Thazhathu Vadakara parish.

Born on February 2, 1972, as the youngest of seven children of the Late T J Joseph and Mariamma, Fr Thomas Tharayil belongs to St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral Church, Changanassery. He had his primary school education at St Joseph's LP School, Changanassery, and high school education at Sacred Heart English Medium School there.

After completing Pre-Degree Course at SB College, Changanassery, he joined St Thomas Minor Seminary, Kurichy. He did philosophical and theological studies at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, and was ordained priest on January 1, 2000, by Archbishop Joseph Powathil. ♦

Source: New Indian Express

90,000 Christians killed for faith in 2016: Scholar

Massimo Introvigne, a sociologist who directs the Center for Studies on New Religions, told Vatican Radio that he estimates that 90,000 Christians were killed in 2016 because of their faith.

70% of them, he said, were killed in African tribal conflicts, while the other 30% were victims of terrorism, government persecution, or the destruction of their towns.

The estimate of 90,000 in 2016—one every six minutes—is down from 105,000 in 2014.

“Without wishing to forget or belittle the suffering of members of other religions, Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world,” said Introvigne. ♦

--- Catholic World News

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

MARCH: Persecuted Christians

That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.

APRIL: Young People

That young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life. ♦



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