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PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

John 13:34





Discover EMMOCT2019



The Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) are committed to promoting and supporting the missionary efforts of the Church through prayer, self-sacrifice, and missionary vocations. They were born from a deep concern for the missions of both laity and clergy in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) together with the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) are currently reinforcing their “efforts to collect and distribute material aid in the light of [their] mission and the formation that this requires, so that missionary integrity, awareness, and responsibility can once again be part of the ordinary life of the entire holy and faithful People of God.” (Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, June 1st, 2018).

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

PROCLAIM

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"Remember how Christ died, once and for all, for our sins. He, the just one, died for the unjust in order to lead us to God. He died as humans do, but was raised to life by the Spirit,"

- 1 Peter 3:18

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The Joy of Resurrection

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

The joy of resurrection makes sense only to those who find joy in life. Someone who has not seen life as a gift of happiness in all its richness, diversity and veracity will find the 'return to life' a curse rather than a blessing. It is puzzling why many remain trapped in troubles and challenges and live in misery, forgetting the fact that when those challenges are overcome one finds Joy.

Coming *into* life in fact brings joy. A new born child brings joy to those who are around - parents, siblings and all others, including strangers. A smile of the child evokes enormous joy. Playing with the new-born child who cannot play, and speaking with a child who has yet to learn to listen and speak, brings joy to us. Though the child does not differentiate between the real and the symbolic, yet we try to express our joy with some symbolic gifts which might well be understood later. However the moment of birth is not joyful to the child as it is for others. The child as long it was in the mother's womb was safe, well-fed and rested. Darkness was a blessing to the child in the womb and light was initially unbearable. It has now to ask for food, warmth and rest. This is the greatest challenge for the child --- to cope with the life outside the womb.

But when a child withstands all these struggles, it has a beautiful world to see, live in and experience. The child which does not overcome these struggles even when it grows develops a negative tone in life.

The months of March and April invite us to reflect on the Passion of Christ and His joyful resurrection. The season of lent is to be understood the same way one understands the journey of the child from the womb into the open world..

There are two things which are vital for entering into the new life - the Sacrifice (washing of the feet) and the Eucharist. A child who wants to see the world first of all has to come out of darkness of the womb and be subject to the new and dangerous environment. Secondly and more importantly, these challenges are faced with the strength that it receives from the mother.

Those who desire to enter into the joy of the resurrection have to take a free decision to accept the challenges of life, even to lose their life, in order to live the values of the Gospel. The strength needed for it comes from the Eucharist in which Jesus is fully present. Only if we want to serve can we enter into the new life - the new and eternal life.

The life on earth is a beautiful life but it has to be faced with the courage to sacrifice our comforts. This will eventually enable us to experience the Joy of resurrection. Till then we are to proclaim the death and resurrection of Christ until he comes again, not only by words but also by our deeds.



Have a Grace-filled season of Lent and a Joy-filled season of Easter.

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
National Director (PMO-India)

Pope Francis appeals for peace, dialogue, religious freedom

Pope Francis on February 4, 2019, brought a fervent appeal for peace, dialogue, and religious freedom to the Global Conference on Human Fraternity being held in Abu Dhabi. It was a dramatic moment in the Holy Father's February 3-5 apostolic journey to the United Arab Emirates that included a lengthy speech, as well as the signing of the Document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" by Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar.

In his speech, Pope Francis emphasized that "no violence can be justified in the name of religion." And he referred to the long-ago meeting of a Saint and Sultan:

"With a heart grateful to the Lord, in this eighth centenary of the meeting between Saint Francis of Assisi and Sultan al-Malik al Kamil, I have welcomed the opportunity to come here as a believer thirsting for peace, as a brother seeking peace with the brethren. We are here to desire peace, to promote peace, to be instruments of peace."

The Holy Father drew a distinction between "fraternity" and "individualism," which can encourage a desire to put "oneself and one's group above others."

"True religious piety consists in loving God with all one's heart and one's neighbor as oneself," the Pope explained. "Religious behavior, therefore, needs continually to be purified from the recurrent temptation to judge others as enemies and adversaries. Each belief system is called to

overcome the divide between friends and enemies, in order to take up the perspective of heaven, which embraces persons without privilege or discrimination."

Freedom of religion goes beyond "freedom of worship" and involves seeing others truly as brothers and sisters, the Holy Father continued. Calling for "courage of dialogue" that he said is the "heart of dialogue" he said this

is essential for the future.

"There is no alternative: we will either build the future together or there will not be a future," the Pope warned. "Religions, in particular, cannot renounce the urgent task of building bridges between peoples and cultures. The time has come when religions should more actively exert themselves, with courage and audacity, and without pretense, to help the human family deepen the capacity for reconciliation, the vision of hope and the concrete paths of peace."



"I look forward to societies where people of different beliefs have the same right of citizenship



and where only in the case of violence in any of its forms is that right removed.”

The Holy Father concluded with an appeal to ending war, which he said should be returned to its “miserable crudeness. In particular, he cited the conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

Document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” reflected the Pope's many themes and stressed the following points:

- The firm conviction that authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted in the values of peace;
- Freedom is a right of every person;
- Justice based on mercy is the path to follow in order to achieve a dignified life to which every human being has a right;
- Dialogue, understanding and the widespread promotion of a culture of tolerance, acceptance of others and of living together peacefully would contribute significantly to reducing many economic, social, political and environmental problems that weigh so heavily on a large part of humanity;
- Dialogue among believers means coming together in the vast space of spiritual, human and shared social values and, from here, transmitting the highest moral virtues that religions aim for. It also means avoiding unproductive discussions;
- The protection of places of worship – synagogues, churches, and mosques – is a duty guaranteed by religions, human values, laws, and

international agreements. Every attempt to attack places of worship or threaten them by violent assaults, bombings or destruction, is a deviation from the teachings of religions as well as a clear violation of international law;

- Terrorism is deplorable and threatens the security of people, be they in the East or the West, the North or the South, and disseminates panic, terror and pessimism, but this is not due to religion, even when terrorists instrumentalize it;
- The concept of citizenship is based on the equality of rights and duties, under which all enjoy justice;
- Good relations between East and West are indisputably necessary for both;
- It is an essential requirement to recognize the right of women to education and employment and to recognize their freedom to exercise their own political rights;
- The protection of the fundamental rights of children to grow up in a family environment, to



receive nutrition, education, and support, are duties of the family and society;

- The protection of the rights of the elderly, the weak, the disabled, and the oppressed is a religious and social obligation that must be guaranteed and defended through strict legislation and the implementation of the relevant international agreements. ♦

World Youth Day 2019

Keeping alive a shared dream

Below is the Holy Father's address given January 24, 2019, at Campo Santa Maria la Antigua Cinta Costera for the opening ceremony of World Youth Day 2019 in Panama.



happen if, by our listening and sharing, we encourage each other to keep walking and to bear witness by proclaiming the Lord through service to our brothers and sisters, and concrete service at that.

I know getting here was not easy. I know how much effort and sacrifice was required for you to participate in this Day. Many weeks of work and commitment and encounters of reflection and prayer have made the journey itself largely its own reward. A disciple is not merely someone

Dear Young People, good evening!

How good it is to get together again, this time in a land that receives us with such radiance and warmth! As we gather in Panama, World Youth Day is once more a celebration of joy and hope for the whole Church and, for the world, a witness of faith.

I remember that in Krakow several people asked me if I was going to be in Panama, and I told them: “I don’t know, but certainly Peter will be there. Peter is going to be there”. Today I am happy to say to you: Peter is with you, to celebrate and renew you in faith and hope. Peter and the Church walk with you, and we want to tell you not to be afraid, to go forward with the same fresh energy and restlessness that helps make us happier and more available, better witnesses to the Gospel. To go forward, not to create a parallel Church that would be more “fun” or “cool” thanks to a fancy youth event, as if that were all you needed or wanted. That way of thinking would not respect either you or everything that the Spirit is saying through you.

Not at all! With you, we want to rediscover and reawaken the Church's constant freshness and youth, opening ourselves to a new Pentecost (cf. SYNOD ON YOUNG PEOPLE, Final Document, 60). As we experienced at the Synod, this can only

who arrives at a certain place, but one who sets out decisively, who is not afraid to take risks and keeps walking. This is the great joy: to keep walking. You have not been afraid to take risks and to keep journeying. Today we were all able to “get here” because for some time now, in our various communities, we have all been “on the road” together.



We come from different cultures and peoples, we speak different languages and we wear different clothes. Each of our peoples has had a different history and lived through different situations. We are different in so many ways! But none of it has stopped us from meeting one another and rejoicing to be together. The reason for this, we

know, is that something unites us. Someone is a brother to us. You, dear friends, have made many sacrifices to be able to meet one another and in this way, you have become true teachers and builders of the culture of encounter. By your actions and your approach, your way of looking at things, your desires and above all your sensitivity, you discredit and defuse the kind of talk that is intent on sowing division, on excluding or rejecting those who are not “like us”. It is because you have that instinct which knows intuitively that “true love does not eliminate legitimate differences, but harmonizes them in a superior unity” (BENEDICT XVI, Homily, 25 January 2006). On the other hand, we know that the father of lies prefers people who are divided and quarreling to people who have learned to work together.

You teach us that encountering one another does not mean having to look alike, or think the same way or do the same things, listening to the same music or wearing the same football jersey. No, not at all... The culture of encounter is a call inviting us to dare to keep alive a shared dream. Yes, a great dream, a dream that has a place for everyone. The dream for which Jesus gave his life on the cross, for which the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost and brought fire to the heart of every man and woman, in your hearts and mine, in the hope of finding room to grow and flourish. A dream named Jesus, sown by the Father in the confidence that it would grow and live in every heart. A dream running through our veins, thrilling our hearts and making them dance whenever we hear the command: “that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34-35).

A saint from these lands liked to say that, “Christianity is not a collection of truths to be

believed, of rules to be followed, or of prohibitions. Seen that way it puts us off. Christianity is a person who loved me immensely, who demands and asks for my love. Christianity is Christ” (cf. Saint Oscar Romero, Homily, 6 November 1977). It means pursuing the dream for which he gave his life: loving with the same love with which he loved us.



We can ask: What keeps us united? Why are we united? What prompts us to encounter each other? The certainty of knowing that we have been loved with a profound love that we neither can nor want to keep quiet about a love that challenges us to

respond in the same way: with love. It is the love of Christ that urges us on (cf. 2Cor 5:14).

A love that does not overwhelm or oppress, cast aside or reduce to silence, humiliate or domineer. It is the love of the Lord, a daily, discreet and respectful love; a love that is free and freeing, a love that heals and raises up. The love of the Lord has to do more with raising up than knocking down, with reconciling than forbidding, with offering new changes than condemning, with the future than the past. It is the quiet love of a hand outstretched to serve, a commitment that draws no attention to itself.

Do you believe in this love? Is it a love that makes sense?

This is the same question and invitation that was addressed to Mary. The angel asked her if she wanted to bear this dream in her womb and give it life, to make it take flesh. She answered: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Mary found the courage to say “yes”. She found the strength to give life to God's dream.

The angel is asking the same thing of each of you, and of me. Do you want this dream to come alive? Do you want to make it take flesh with your

...Continued on Page 19

Second Vatican Council

Most monumental eccleisial event in modern history

By Robert Mickens, Rome

It is now 60 years since Pope John XXIII surprised the world by announcing plans to hold what soon after would be called the Second Vatican Council. It would be the first such worldwide gathering of bishops of its kind in some nine decades.

The date was Sunday January 25, 1959 — the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and the final day of the Octave for Christian Unity. The place was the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome.

The 77-year-old John had been Bishop of Rome for only three months and he made his surprise announcement to a small group of curial cardinals who gathered with him after Mass in the chapter room of the adjacent Benedictine monastery.

"Trembling a little with emotion, but at the same time humbly resolute in my purpose, I announce to you a double celebration which I propose to undertake: a diocesan synod for the city, and a general council for the Universal Church," Pope John said.

Those who were able to hear must have been stunned at the calling of a council. The "new" pope had told only a few people of his plans to make the announcement.

They included his recently appointed Secretary of State, Cardinal Domenico Tardini, and his personal secretary, Msgr. Loris Capovilla (who finally got a red hat in 2014 at age 98, thanks to Pope Francis).

But before the surprised cardinals could catch their breath John continued, saying the upcoming synod and council would "lead happily to the desired and awaited bringing up-to-date of the Code of Canon Law."

He said he would be "grateful" to the cardinals "present and to all those far away" if they



would "kindly offer their suggestions... on how to carry out this triple program."

At the time there were only 75 cardinals in the entire world. (Today there are 223, of which 124 are under the age of 80.) Twenty-three of the 75 in 1959 had become cardinals only six weeks earlier.

One of them was Franz König of Vienna, who died in 2004 at 98 years of age. He was the last survivor of those who were cardinals when John

XXIII announced Vatican Council II.

A neglected commemoration?

Only two men who were bishops at the time are still alive -- Cardinal José de Jesús Pimiento Rodríguez of Colombia, who will be 100 years old next month; and Archbishop Bernardino Piñera Carvallo of Chile, who turned 103 last September.



There are still a few Catholic leaders today who were entering seminary or were already young priests when John made his announcement at St. Paul's Outside the Walls. Almost all of them are already beyond retirement age.

But the anniversary of the announcement of the Council has never been the occasion of major celebrations at the Vatican.



Pope Paul VI did not make a big deal of the date. Neither did John Paul II.

During a number of years they did not even to go to St. Paul's to celebrate the feast of the Apostle's conversion or to mark the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

When he had his very first opportunity to do so, John Paul departed for Latin America. On the morning of Jan. 25, 1979 (the 20th anniversary of the announcement), the Polish pope set off for the Dominican Republic, Mexico and the Bahamas on what would be the first of his record-setting 104 pastoral journeys abroad.

A few of those other trips also overlapped with the Jan. 25 occurrence. But to his credit, John Paul often acknowledged the history-changing announcement during the many other times he did go to St. Paul's Basilica for the feast of the saint's conversion, though he usually did so only by way of a passing reference.

This year, even before the 60th anniversary of John XXIII's announcement arrived, Pope Francis was already in Panama to celebrate World Youth Day.

A shift in focus

The 50th anniversary in 2009, however, was quite different. Benedict XVI was still pope.

And during an ecumenical service at St. Paul's, he concluded his theological reflections by "referring to an event that the more elderly among us certainly cannot forget." He recalled that it was "exactly 50 years ago" that Pope John "manifested for the first time in this place his will to convoke 'an ecumenical Council for the universal Church.'"

Benedict called it a "providential decision" that, by John's "firm conviction," was inspired by

the Holy Spirit. The now-retired pope suggested the announcement of Vatican II itself had led to a "fundamental contribution to ecumenism, summarized in the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*."

In fact, in the nearly four years of preparation leading up to the council's official opening in December 1962, it became more and more evident that one of Pope John's burning desires for the worldwide gathering was that it would help heal the divisions of the various Christian churches and denominations.

"The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council," says the first line in the Decree on Ecumenism.

And so, seeking Christian unity and celebrating the achievements gained toward that goal — rather than honoring the calling of the council — has been the main focus of the popes on the Jan. 25th feast.

That is not a bad thing at all. In fact, it is one of the great fruits of Vatican II.

The start of a major transformation

But, as Benedict XVI said, it all started with an announcement by a 77-year-old man who — we might add — had been elected only three months earlier as a seat-warmer, a transitional (read: intermediate) pope who would guide the Barque of Peter, steady as she goes.

Of course, Pope John was anything but that. His announcement that Sunday in the Benedictine chapter room at the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls was only the beginning of a major transition (read: conversion, transformation), the genuine effects of which we are only beginning to experience today.

John's announcement led to the most monumental ecclesial event in modern history, certainly since the 16th century Council of Trent. No one could have even imagined that when he called for the Council 60 years ago.

But Pope John lived long enough only to launch the ship. Pope Paul then guided it out of port, often facing turbulence and dissent. The

The Sacrament of Matrimony

Scriptural Background - II

By Fr Dr S Joseph Lionel



1.2. Marital Love in the NT

The gospels provide us with two fundamental statements made by Christ himself on the subject of marriage.

The first is an affirmation of the plan of married life within the economy of creation to which Genesis had already given clear assent. Through this affirmation the OT idea of marriage was brought to fulfillment (See Mk 10:2-12 and parallels): “But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mk 10:6-9).

The second is eschatological statement, where the quest for the kingdom of God takes precedence over marriage, so that celibacy appears, with marriage, as a characteristic Christian subservience to the kingdom of God: “...there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of

heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it” (Mt 19:12). These two affirmations are direct extensions of the two OT confessions of faith: that of creation, and that of the covenant of grace.

The statement of Jesus on the indissolubility of monogamous marriage was absolute in an unprecedented way: “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Mt 19:6); “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her” (Mk 10:11-12); and “He who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Lk 16:18).

Jesus' view of marriage mentioned in the synoptic gospels bears undeniable witness to a radical attitude towards the principle of the holiness of marriage. According to the John's gospel, the wedding feast at Cana was graced by the presence of Jesus himself (Jn 2:1-11). St. Paul

continued to emphasize the teaching of Jesus on indissolubility. Even in the context of the spread of Christian faith among the gentiles when marriage between a believer and unbeliever was not rare Paul insisted indissolubility:

If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the

unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy (ICor 7:12-14).





The teaching on indissolubility is not merely a legal concept but through this emphatic writing, Paul presents marriage as a covenant reality. As God cannot ignore His covenantal love towards his people the husband and wife united through marriage cannot forget that it is the covenantal love that unites them.

The central text on marriage in the Pauline writing (Eph 5:21-33) is distinct in many ways. Pauline insight not only asserts what the Book of Genesis mentions regarding the unity of man and woman, but also it explains the unity in the Christological context of Christ's love for the Church.

When we read the writings of Paul, "He who loves his wife loves himself" (Eph 5:28), it echoes the words from Genesis: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23). As he mentions in his letter his primary intention was to explain the intimate relationship between Christ and His Church. While doing so, he brings out the Christian understanding of the intimacy between husband and wife:

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Eph 5:31-32). Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies (Eph 5:25-28).

The first letter of St. Peter also brings out beautifully the loving relationship between the husband and wife:

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ... Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers (1 Peter 3:1-2,7).



Following the NT teachings on marriage by Jesus and the apostles, the early Church viewed marriage as a strong existing reality. In the next section we will study the early Christian practice regarding marriage and the development of the liturgical rite of marriage from the earliest evidence available. ♦

Scripture Reading: Why and How - II

By Fr Ralph daCosta S.J.

God speaks to his people in varying situations and contexts through prophets. Wise men, priests, and kings. This is to explain His will to them and to elicit a response of acceptance and obedience so that they enjoy peace and prosperity, with security and growth, free from anxiety and all fear. He encounters them in their concrete circumstances of life, be it social relationships, economics, politics and as they go into the depths of their conscience and freedom. He poses to them a challenge as they go through daily existence inviting them to develop themselves as persons, communities and the People of God.

This same purpose holds good even for the people of today. Can we see reality with the eyes of God and come to discern His will so that we can make it our own will and transform our society into the Kingdom of God? Can we make it a world where the principles of God, his values and his attitudes direct the lives of one and all? When we read the Bible today we are to search for a connect between the contemporary problems and the biblical narrative. This enables us to understand what is happening and at the same time draw us into the realm of faith, of the Kingdom of God. We come to identify with the God-filled man, with Jesus Christ, and thus find the Word made flesh in contemporary history and speak of Him to our fellow beings.

In this we can become like the two on the road to Emmaus, feel our hearts burning within us and proclaim Jesus, the Risen Lord to others. Thus we evangelize, we bring the Good News into our self-

seeking world. This will enable us to see Christ as a real human being who can interact with us. We

will come to discover that God's word made flesh in Jesus Christ is the only solution to today's contemporary problems and the answer to all the questions which a technological and electronic world poses to us. If the Word of God cannot do this, it is a failure, God is dead

and we are abandoned to our own resources. But Jesus said "I am with you for all time".

"It is the word of God and not of man" 1Th 2:13; "All Scriptures are for teaching," 2Tim 1:6

Yet the Word of God is to be understood according to the mind of God and the mind of the sacred writers who are inspired by the Spirit of God, because it is the word of God and not the



words of men alone. Hence they need prior study before a final interpretation.

Our advantage over past generations is that we have the Bible in our hands, commentaries,

tools on the sacred text, and we have to use all of this as normative of our faith as we understand it as God's revelation to his Church and thereby as the authoritative word of God. This is only when it is interpreted in the line of authentic Church traditions – cf. the Formation of the Canon, the condemnation of heretical teaching by the Councils. Hence Textual Criticism, Form Criticism, Historical Criticism is to be undertaken

in the line of the *Magisterium*. Here enters the Protestant Reformation and subsequent interpretation of all and sundry, even in today's world and Church, in Catechetics, Homiletics, Prayer Services, Bible Study Groups etc.

The Word of God cannot be assimilated into any form of Spirituality unless it is in accordance with the apostolic faith through the centuries – Church Fathers, Doctors of the Church, Councils, Papal Teachings, obedience to the official *Magisterium*.

Then only does it constitute a normative guide for any valid Christian religious experience. (David Stanley)

All prayer is a dialogue between man and God, and when Scripture is used in prayer it is because it is accepted as God's revelation, God's conversation with man, God's revelation and hence God's word to man in words and deeds. A spiritual, interior experience of God in the human person is received by the human being and translated to others in human words of a particular period of time, in a particular human language and human

culture. It is the experience which is revealed – this is the *dabar Yhwh* – this is true of all texts, including the words of Jesus.

The response of man to God is also recorded

in the sacred texts (the writings and letters of the New Testament), and are part of the Word of God, because they are authenticated by God's people, as human obedience and surrender to God (faith), accepted by



God and revealed as such in its coherence with God's self revelation. Thus God's word becomes incarnate, in man, in Jesus, in the Living Church. This is what is of primary importance in the privileged experience of God by the human person, and communicated to us through his human words. It is God who grants this experience and assists those who respond to it, as also those who transmit the dialogue in human words. Consequently we see the intensely personal nature of these varying reactions to God's action in history, in persons, in Jesus Christ as in the Gospels. Thus these texts become normative of our own individual, or the Church's communitarian, experience of God in human history. This explains the various charisms that serve as formulations of the various spiritualities in the Church.

The Word of God in the words of man is to be seen in the context of life of the persons involved as also in the context of the written word, as it is recorded for the advantage, the guidance of the hearer or reader. As such, it is to be seen not only as affecting the intelligence of the human person but as God's action on the total human person, feelings, emotions, sentiments, A way of perceiving,

Feet washed ... Bread broken

By Mahesh H Lobo

The Stole and the Towel is the title of a book, which sums up the message of the Italian bishop Tony Bello, who died of cancer at the age of 58. On Maundy Thursday of 1993, while on his deathbed, he dictated a pastoral letter to the priests of his diocese. He called upon them to be bound by "the stole and the towel". The stole symbolizes union with Christ in the Eucharist, and the towel symbolizes union with humanity by service. The priest is called upon to be united with the Lord in the Eucharist and with the people as their servant. On Maundy Thursday we celebrate the institution of both the Eucharist and the priesthood: the feast of "the stole and the towel", the feast of LOVE and SERVICE.

If we examine the life of people in Palestine during the time of Jesus we realize that life was tough and made grueling demands especially on the travelers. To cover the distance, people had to walk through the dusty roads, through hills and valleys, at time taking some rests in the shelter homes, etc. So they arrived to their destination at times with sore feet and aching legs. The welcome at the host's house included a washing of the feet with some hot water and, if needed, a massage. This would relieve them of ache and pain. This washing and massage was done by the domestic servants or by the slaves.

In the upper room, we have a beautiful scene enacted by none other than the Messiah, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. It is the Passover Meal and of course Jesus' last meal with His disciples. In a sense, it is a farewell meal. They are all together for the meal, reclining at the table as the Jewish custom was. Then all of a sudden, to the utter surprise of the apostles, Jesus takes off his outer garment, uses a towel to wrap his waist, takes

water in a jug and a basin. He kneels at the feet of the apostles to wash their feet. Stop for a moment!

Imagine the scene – before the apostles could grasp or have inkling to what is to come; He is at their feet – unimaginable and totally out of the ordinary happens here. The Master, the Rabbi, the Son of God, washing the feet of his disciples, His creatures! The kind of service done by the servants and slaves is performed by the Master and Lord.

Let us for a moment leave the upper room and go back to Jesus' public ministry. Jesus comments on the attitude of the Pharisees and Scribes: Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in

long robes, and love salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." (Lk 20:46-47; Mt 23:6; Mk 12:39)

When he saw his disciples arguing among themselves who is the greatest, he said: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mt 20:25-28; Mk 10:42-45) Jesus clearly states why he came. Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

In serving one breaks oneself. Yes, Jesus took the bread, said the blessing and broke it and gave it to his disciples – take and eat for this is my body – broken for you! In serving, Jesus had broken His body so that He may lift us up. At our feet he bent





poignant summary - ...if anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last and the servant of all” (Mark 9:34).

To Jesus, greatness and power were not measured by the number of people serving a leader but the extent that the leader was serving the people under him or her.

There are two components of servant-leadership. The first is that of being a servant. The second is being a leader. “Servant”

defines the timeless, changeless style and attitude that must be present in our lives. “Leadership” defines the responsibility.

As believers we are all called to be servants. When we assume the responsibility of motivating people to bring about purposeful change we must do so as servant-leaders. Servant-leaders who serve but do not lead may be wonderful servants but they are not servant-leaders. Priests are called to “lead with diligence” (Rom 12:8). If God has asked you to lead, then you are responsible and

down to cleanse us and to our hands he gave the broken pieces of his body to nourish us!

We remember and commemorate this event of the Last Supper with three major ideas: Love manifested through service (Washing of the feet); Love manifested by giving oneself to others (the Holy Eucharist) and the commandment to: Do it in memory of me (the Priesthood). Isn't it that Jesus places two things before he says: Do this in memory of me, i.e., washing of the feet and breaking of the bread. In a narrow sense, one can say that Jesus wanted the breaking of the bread and blessing of the cup to be repeated in His memory. But if we carefully hear his discourse after washing the feet, he wants the apostles to wash one another's feet. So, do it in memory of me, truly encompasses in the broader sense of the word, both the events – washing of the feet as well as the breaking of the bread. In a sense, there cannot be the breaking of the bread without washing of the feet.

Truly, this is to reiterate what must be the life of a person who is called to priesthood – to break the bread and bless the cup. In order to wear the stole, one has first to wear the towel; in order to stand up and take the bread and say: this is my body; one must first bend down at the feet of the faithful in all humility and serve them!

Several times in the gospels, Jesus spoke of a different kind of leadership, usually ending with a



accountable to lead. Lack of leadership is chaos. Lack of leadership produces followers who are “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:36). In God's kingdom, leaders serve us best by leading us and lead best by serving us.

A priest therefore is challenged to take up the prophetic servant-leadership of Jesus. That is the

primary role of an ordained priest to be “alter Christus” to the community in which they are placed to serve. Unfortunately this aspect is forgotten and then we have great administrators, masters, rulers, educators, social work entrepreneurs, scholars, etc., in the garb of priests. It doesn't mean that these areas are unnecessary or evil or unacceptable. But primarily a priest is called to be a minister (Latin word meaning servant) of Word and Sacraments. So the function of the priest would be to break the Word and to break the bread. This is possible and it can be done meaningfully and effectively only after washing the feet and breaking oneself to serve and nourish the congregation.

Another important dimension of this call to priesthood is obedience. The first “yes” to the call given by the candidate to priesthood must be lived at all times and in all circumstances like Mother Mary who said “yes” to God's invitation to be the Mother of the Saviour and she lived it till the end right up to Calvary at the foot of the Cross. So too, a priest, who accepted God's call to be a priest has no other option but to live, being obedient to the law and to the Spirit. Pope Francis, speaking on the liturgy on the feast of Presentation of our Lord in the temple (02 February 2019) stressed the need of obedience as an important ingredient of a consecrated person.

There is no substitute for obedience in the life of a priest as he is called to have the mind and



attitude of Jesus who became obedient till the end, even to the death on the cross (ref: Philippians 2:6-11). In person, the priest presents Jesus Christ in administering sacraments, forgiving sins, celebrating the Eucharist and repeats the words of Jesus. This is a real challenge a priest has to face and accept. As Jesus did not count equality with God but for our salvation, he set aside his position and became man, being obedient “to the law and to the Spirit”, a priest has to set aside his personal will and become obedient “to the law and to the Spirit”. There is no other way given to him to fulfill the responsibilities of his vocation to be a priest.

So the Stole and Towel go together and we cannot separate them. The hands that breaks the bread and blesses the cup must get used to washing of the feet. It is a challenge to a priest in his priestly ministry to accept the stole and towel and that too in obedience “to the Law and to the Spirit”. ♦

Continued from Page 8: Most monumental ecclesial event in modern history



popes following him tried to chart a more careful, disciplined course, until finally turning back and

settling for the safety of the harbor.

And then came Pope Francis!

He has moved the Church and her people out of their comfort zone, away from an ideological system of theologized and black-and-white formulas. He has set the People of God back on a journey of discipleship that is sometimes messy, confusing, painful. But one that is also rewarding, life-giving and exhilarating.

As others have said, Francis has reconnected the Church to the reforming spirit of Vatican II. But let us never forget, it all started on Jan. 25, 1959. ♦

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Turibius of Mogrovejo

16 November 1538 - 23 March 1606

Feast Day: 23 March

Catholics in Latin America and throughout the world celebrate the life and ministry of St Turibius of Mogrovejo on March 23. The 16th century bishop upheld the rights of Peru's indigenous peoples, and became one of the first canonized saints of the Americas.

Toribio Alfonso de Mogrovejo was born on 16 November 1538 in the Valladolid province in Habsburg Spain to the nobles Luis Alfonso de Mogrovejo and Ana de Roblès i Morán; his sister was Grimanese de Mogrovejo i Robledo. He was named after Saint Toribio.

He frequently prayed, fasted, and gave to the poor even as a child, and eventually developed the daily habit of praying the Rosary along with the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He went on to study law at the University of Salamanca, and eventually served as a judge for five years in the territory of Granada. His judicial wisdom and diligence drew the attention of King Philip II, who wanted Turibius – who was still a layman – to be consecrated as a missionary archbishop for the Spanish colony of Peru.

When the archdiocese of Lima in Peru required a new leader, Turibius was chosen to fill the post: He was the one person with the strength of character and holiness of spirit to heal the scandals that had infected that area. He cited all the canons that forbade giving laymen ecclesiastical dignities, but he was overruled. Turibius was ordained priest and bishop and sent to Peru, where he found colonialism at its worst. The Spanish conquerors were guilty of every sort of oppression of the native population. Abuses among the clergy were



flagrant, and he devoted his energies and suffering to this area first.

He began the long and arduous visitation of an immense archdiocese, studying the language, staying two or three days in each place, often with neither bed nor food. Turibius confessed every morning to his chaplain, and celebrated Mass with intense fervor. Among those to whom he gave the Sacrament of Confirmation was the future Saint Rose of Lima, and possibly the future Saint Martin de Porres. After 1590, he had the help of another great missionary, Francis Solanus, now also a saint.

He was a noted and charismatic preacher who set about baptizing and catechizing to the natives while confirming almost half a million people; those included Rose of Lima and Martin de Porres. The archbishop was a staunch advocate for archdiocesan reform and set to work reforming the diocesan priests from impurities and scandals while instituting new educational procedures for seminaries.

To the indigenous Peruvians, the archbishop was a herald of the Gospel who held their lives as more precious than their country's supplies of gold and silver. But to the many colonists whose behavior showed no sign of their Catholic origins, he was a prophetic scourge – whose efforts to awaken the public conscience earned him rebukes and opposition.

He predicted at some stage the exact date and hour of his death. It was in Pacasmayo during a pastoral visit that he contracted a fever but continued laboring to the last and arrived at Saña in

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Lidwina

April 1380 - 14 April 1433

Feast Day: 14 April

A life of faith does not mean a life free of suffering. Whether through the lessons of the Cross or the hard knocks that are an inevitable part of existence, it is a given that often we must pass through dark valleys to reach green pastures.

Born at Schiedam, Holland, 18 April 1380; died 14 April, 1433. Her father, Peter by name, came of a noble family while her mother Petronella, born at Kethel, Holland, was a poor country girl. Very early in her life Lidwina was drawn towards the Mother of God and prayed a great deal before the miraculous image of Our Lady of Schiedam.

During the winter of the year of 1395, Lidwina went skating with her friends, one of whom caused her to fall upon some ice with such violence that she broke a rib in her right side. This was the beginning of her martyrdom. Her incapacitation included excruciating headaches, nausea and dehydration. Eventually, she developed gangrene, and her ailment spread throughout her entire body. She went through the remainder of her life, bedridden and in pain, with her final seven years spent blind. Parts of her body fell off, and blood discharged from her mouth, ears and nose. As if this were not enough, she also experienced stigmata which, however much a gift of the Spirit, surely augmented her suffering. In modern history, she has been recognized for having had one of the first known cases of multiple sclerosis.



This turned out to be a “happy accident” and allowed her time to pray and offer her suffering to God. She drew closer to God in a deep relationship and was given many mystical visions. Lidwina was known by all in the town as a holy woman and healer. For years she lay in pain which seemed to increase constantly. Lidwina's anguish was not limited to physical matters. Suspicious of her grotesque deterioration, some visitors and townspeople suggested she was plagued by the devil. Her pastor, Andries, brought her an

unconsecrated host, but the saint distinguished it at once. But God rewarded her with a wonderful gift of prayer and also with visions. Numerous miracles took place at her bed-side.

In a vision she was shown a rose-bush with the words, "When this shall be in bloom, your suffering will be at an end." In the spring of the year 1433, she exclaimed, "I see the rose-bush in full bloom!" From her fifteenth to her fifty-third year, she suffered every imaginable pain; she was one sore from head to foot and was greatly emaciated. On the morning of Easter Day 1433, she was in deep contemplation and beheld, in a vision, Christ coming towards her to administer the last Sacrament. She died in the odour of great sanctity. At once her grave became a place of pilgrimage, and as early as 1434 a chapel was built over it. Devotion to her spread rapidly after her death and a biography was written by Thomas à Kempis, who is famous for his popular spiritual classic, *The*

SYMPOSIUM

Christian faith in a multi-cultural context

A Theological Symposium on Christian Faith in a Multicultural Context was held at St John's Medical College Campus in Bangalore, India from January 21 to 24, 2019. The Symposium, organized by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), was attended by 44 Bishops and Theologians from India.

The CDF Delegation consisted of Cardinal Luis F Ladaria, SJ, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop J Augustine Di Noia, OP, Adjunct Secretary, and some Officials of the same Congregation. Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro, the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See in India, also took part in the meeting.

The participants from the Indian Episcopate, representing the three Ritual Churches of the country, were led by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, President of the CBCI, Cardinal Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, President of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Church, Cardinal Mar George Alencherry, President of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church, and Archbishop Thomas Mar Koorilos, Chairman of the CBCI Office for Doctrine. The meeting was attended by another 18 Archbishops and Bishops, and 22 Theologians, priests, sisters and laymen, representing the three *sui iuris* Churches in India.

The idea of an annual meeting between Bishops and Theologians in India was mooted in 1996. Later, during the gathering of a Delegation of Indian Bishops with Representatives of various Dicasteries of the Holy See in Rome, a proposal was made for the participation of the CDF in such a meeting. Responding affirmatively to this invitation, the Congregation participated in a Theological Colloquium with Bishops and Theologians from January 16 to 22, 2011.

Eight years later, this Symposium was organized to foster mutual understanding and fraternal cooperation. The Indian subcontinent is indeed a touchstone for the peaceful coexistence of peoples with considerable linguistic, religious and cultural diversities. Its great natural and human resources make it one of the most promising countries in the world. Having received the Gospel from the very beginning of Christianity, Catholics in India have made outstanding contributions to the development of the country, especially through numerous educational institutions, healthcare centers, social welfare organizations and charitable works.

At the beginning of the gathering, the President of the CBCI offered a warm welcome to all the participants and recalled the purpose of the Symposium. The Prefect of the CDF then delivered an inaugural address on the specific vocation of the theologian for the promotion of the Catholic faith.

Taking into account the multicultural context of India, the topics chosen for the five sessions of the Theological Symposium addressed some of the challenges facing the Church today: *The Meaning of Christian Salvation in a Pluralistic World: Reflections on the Message of Placuit Deo* (Archbishop J Augustine Di Noia, OP); *Sent, Built on Rock, Ablaze: Harmonizing Hierarchical and Charismatic Gifts in a Little Indian Flock* (Prof Francis Gonsalves, SJ; Response by Prof Thomas Kollampampil, CMI); *Multiculturalism in India and its Challenges* (Bishop Thomas Dabre; Response by Bishop Barnabas Mar Jacob, OIC); *Evangelization and Interreligious Interactions: Biblical and Patristic Reflections* (Prof Thomas Manjaly; Response by Prof SrMetti Amirtham); *Living the Christian Faith in an Inter-religious and Multi-cultural Context* (Archbishop Felix Machado).

The presentations were followed by lively discussions oriented towards a deeper understanding of

the themes, taking into account the specific situation of the Church in India and the challenges to which Bishops and Theologians need to respond. A spirit of open dialogue, mutual respect, and cordial exchange of thoughts and experiences characterized the discussions and enabled all to have a greater appreciation of the issues involved. Different questions regarding the specific role and work of the CDF, and its cooperation with the Episcopal Conferences and their Doctrinal Commissions, were clarified.

The Masses, celebrated according to the different Rites, gave joyful expression to the specific nature of the unity and diversity of the Church in India.

Informal exchanges during the meals, and in the evenings, offered possibilities to deepen personal contacts and friendships. The participants were thankful for the wonderful hospitality offered by the St John's Medical College Campus in Bangalore.

The Theological Symposium was an enriching experience for all participants who, as Pastors and Theologians, are called to work together for the common mission of the Church.

The meeting concluded on a note of hope that the People of God, united among themselves under the care of their Bishops, continue to contribute to the common good of this great country. ♦

Continued from Page 6: Keeping alive a shared dream

hands, with your feet, with your gaze, with your heart? Do you want the Father's love to open new horizons for you and bring you along paths never imagined or hoped for, dreamt or expected, making our hearts rejoice, sing and dance?

Do we have the courage to say to the angel, as Mary did: Behold the servants of the Lord; let it be done?

Dear young friends, the most hope-filled result of this Day will not be a final document, a joint letter or a programme to be carried out. The most hope-filled result of this meeting will be your faces and a prayer.

Each of you will return home with the new strength born of every encounter with others and with the Lord. You will return home filled with the Holy Spirit so that you can cherish and keep alive the dream that makes us brothers and sisters, and that we must not let grow cold in the heart of our world. Wherever we may be and whatever we may do, we can always look up and say, "Lord, teach me to love as you have loved us". Will you repeat those words with me? "Lord, teach me to love as you have loved us".

We cannot conclude this first encounter without giving thanks. Thank you to all those who have prepared this World Youth Day with so much

enthusiasm. Thank you for encouraging one another to build up and to welcome, and for saying "yes" to God's dream of seeing his sons and daughters gathered.

Thank you to Archbishop Ulloa and his team



who have helped Panama to be today not only a channel that joins oceans, but also a channel where God's dream continues to find new streams that enable it to grow, to multiply and to spread to every corner of the earth.

Dear friends, may Jesus bless you and Santa Maria Antigua ever accompany you so that we can say without fear, as she does: "I am here. Let it be done".

----- Libreria Editrice Vatican ♦

Continued from Page 12: Scripture Reading: Why and How - II

judging, willing and doing. The experience affects the person in one's totality and consequently in one's reactions, system of values, life style. As Jesus demands, it brings about a *metanoia* and a submission to the Good News, the glad tidings of great joy, the person of Jesus, the Word made flesh. It gives meaning to suffering, death, sacrifice, love, beauty that rationality often cannot satisfy. It is an existential experience involving the whole person



in one's past, present and future. This Rom 15:4, 2 Tim 3:16-17, his intellect, his imagination, his affectivity and ultimately his will. ♦

Continued from Page 16: St Turibius of Mogrovejo



a critical condition. He dragged himself to receive the Viaticum and died not long after this on 23 March 1606 (Holy Thursday) at 3:30pm at the

Saint Augustine convent. His final words were those of Jesus Christ on the Cross: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit". His remains are interred in the archdiocesan cathedral.

His beatification was celebrated under Pope Innocent XI in 1679 and Pope Benedict XIII canonized him as a saint on 10 December 1726. Pope John Paul II proclaimed him the patron saint for the Latin American episcopate in 1983.

The Lord indeed writes straight with crooked lines. Against his will, and from the unlikely springboard of an Inquisition tribunal, this man became the Christ-like shepherd of a poor and oppressed people. God gave him the gift of loving others as they needed it.

Source: www.catholicnewsagency.com; www.franciscanmedia.org ♦

Continued from Page 17: St Lidwina



Imitation of Christ.

In 1615 her relics were conveyed to Brussels, but in 1871 they were returned to Schiedam. On 14

March 1890, Leo XIII put the official sanction of the Church upon that veneration which had existed for centuries.

While Lidwina's fall didn't allow her to ice skate again, it did provide an opportunity to deepen her relationship with God, similar to how St Ignatius of Loyola discovered his mission in life after a battle injury. God's ways are often mysterious, but one thing is certain, if we fall, God will always be there to pick us back up again. She is declared as the patron saint of ice skating

Source: www.newadvent.org; www.catholic.org/encyclopedia; <https://bustedhalo.com/mini> stry-resources; www.ncronline.org ♦

The power of determination

(A true story about athlete Glenn Cunningham who was horribly burned in a schoolhouse fire at the age of 8. Doctors predicted he would never walk again. Determined to walk, Glenn would throw himself off his wheelchair and pull his body across the yard and along a fence. Twenty-two months later, he took his first steps and through sheer determination, learned to run despite the pain...)

The little country schoolhouse was heated by an old-fashioned, pot-bellied coal stove. A little boy had the job of coming to school early each day to start the fire and warm the room before his teacher and his classmates arrived.

One morning they arrived to find the schoolhouse engulfed in flames. They dragged the unconscious little boy out of the flaming building more dead than alive. He had major burns over the lower half of his body and was taken to a nearby county hospital.

From his bed the dreadfully burned, semi-conscious little boy faintly heard the doctor talking to his mother. The doctor told his mother that her son would surely die – which was for the best, really – for the terrible fire had devastated the lower half of his body.

But the brave boy didn't want to die. He made up his mind that he would survive. Somehow, to the amazement of the physician, he did survive. When the mortal danger was past, he again heard the doctor and his mother speaking quietly. The mother was told that since the fire had destroyed so much flesh in the lower part of his body, it would almost be better if he had died, since he was doomed to be a lifetime cripple with no use at all of his lower limbs.



Once more the brave boy made up his mind. He would not be a cripple. He would walk. But unfortunately from the waist down, he had no motor ability. His thin legs just dangled there, all but lifeless.

Ultimately he was released from the hospital. Every day his mother would massage his little legs, but there was no feeling, no control, nothing. Yet his determination that he would walk was as strong as ever.

When he wasn't in bed, he was confined to a wheelchair. One sunny day his mother wheeled him out into the yard to get some fresh air. This day, instead of

sitting there, he threw himself from the chair. He pulled himself across the grass, dragging his legs behind him.

He worked his way to the white picket fence bordering their lot. With great effort, he raised himself up on the fence. Then, stake by stake, he began dragging himself along the fence, resolved that he would walk. He started to do this every day until he wore a smooth path all around the yard beside the fence. There was nothing he wanted more than to develop life in those legs.

Ultimately through his daily massages, his iron persistence and his resolute determination, he did develop the ability to stand up, then to walk haltingly, then to walk by himself – and then – to



money, preferring to pay his own way.

- By sophomore year, ran the 1,500 meter race at the 1932 Olympics, but finished fourth due to a severe cold.
- By senior year, set a world record for the mile of 4:06.8 and held seven of the top 13 fastest recorded times for the mile.
- In 1936, voted “Most Popular Athlete” by his fellow athletes.

run. He began to walk to school, then to run to school, to run for the sheer joy of running. Later in college he made the track team.

Still later in Madison Square Garden this young man who was not expected to survive, who would surely never walk, who could never hope to run – this determined young man, Dr. Glenn Cunningham, ran the world's fastest mile**!

Story Told By Burt Dubin, Developer of Speaking Success System.

***On June 16, 1934, Glenn Cunningham ran the mile in 4:06.8 minutes, breaking the world's record. His effort portrays that whatever you want to create in your life is yours for the making. As long as you desire it enough and allow your will to guide you, you can have and be whatever your heart desires. The only one that can put limits on our personal will is we ourselves. Develop and encourage your will to create and all the forces of nature within and without will help you bring your desire to pass.*

Life Summary:

- 8 years old, was horribly burned in a schoolhouse fire. Doctors predicted he would never walk again.
- 22 months later, took his first steps and through sheer determination, learned to run despite the pain.
- In high school, set records for the mile and later attended Kansas University.
- While at Kansas, refused all scholarship

• He went on to earn a master's degree from University of Iowa and later a doctorate from New York University.

- While in New York, won 21 of 31 races at Madison Square Gardens and set an indoor mile record there in 1938. His fastest mile time was 4:04.4 at a Dartmouth track meet in 1938.
- When the 1940 Olympics were cancelled, he retired from his running career and taught at Cornell College in Iowa.
- During World War II, he served two years in the Navy.



Spent the remainder of his life running the Glenn Cunningham Youth Ranch for troubled kids in Kansas, USA. It is estimated that he and his wife raised around 9,000 kids on their ranch in the years until his death in 1988. ♦

News Round-Up

News Feast of Pope Paul VI instituted

Pope Francis, assenting to the petitions and desires of the People of God, has decreed that the celebration of Pope Saint Paul VI, should be inserted into the Roman Calendar on 29 May with the rank of optional memorial' ♦

Tuticorin gets new bishop

Pope Francis has appointed Father Stephen Antony Pillai, a priest of Vellore diocese, the new bishop of Tuticorin after accepting the resignation of Bishop Yvon Ambroise, who resigned upon arriving the canonical age limit of 75 years. Bishop Ambroise will be the Apostolic Administrator of Tuticorin until the new bishop is ordained and canonically takes possession.

Bishop-named Pillai was director of the Diocesan Retreat Centre and Professor at St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli at the time of appointment. ♦

New Office Bearers Elected for CCBI

Most Rev Dr Filipe Neri Ferrão, Archbishop of Goa and Daman, was elected the new President of the CCBI by the 31st Plenary Assembly of the National Episcopal Conference of India, at Joe Animation Centre, Mahabalipuram, Chennai, Tamilnadu. He will replace His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, who served the Conference as its President for three terms of two years each from 2013 to 2019.

Most Rev Dr George Antonysamy, Archbishop of Chennai-Mylapore, and Most Rev Dr Anil Joseph Thomas Couto, Archbishop of Delhi, were re-elected CCBI Vice-President and Secretary General respectively.

Archbishop Filipe Neri (65) was the former Vice-President of the CCBI from 2011 to 2017. He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman at the age of 40, on 20 December, 1993. He was installed as the Archbishop on 21 March, 2004. He also served the CBCI as its Vice President. He is presently the Chairman of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) Office of Education and Faith Formation (OEFF).

Archbishop Antonysamy (66) held various responsibilities of the Catholic Church in the past, viz. Pope's Ambassador to Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone; charge d'Affaires of the Vatican Embassy in Jordan. In 2012 he was appointed the sixth Archbishop of Chennai-Mylapore Archdiocese.

The re-elected Secretary General of the CCBI Archbishop Anil Couto (64) was the Auxiliary Bishop of Delhi, and Bishop of Jullundur. At present he is the Archbishop of Delhi since 2012. ♦

Pakistan: Asia Bibi acquitted

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Jan 29 rejected a final petition challenging the release of Catholic woman Asia Bibi on charges of blasphemy. The ruling means that she is free to leave the country after receiving death threats and living in hiding.

Bibi was sentenced to death in 2010 after being convicted of insulting the Prophet Muhammad during an altercation with Muslim farm workers.

After hearing arguments, Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa dismissed the petition on merit and upheld Bibi's acquittal. He said Bibi's accusers were guilty of perjury and if the case had not been so sensitive, they would have been jailed for life. "The image of Islam we are showing to the world gives me much grief and sorrow," Khosa said. ♦

Delhi court rules in favor of Christian missionary

Delhi High Court recently quashed an order to deport a Christian doctor, India-born US citizen Christo Thomas Philip, by ruling he has the right to practice his faith and offer his services for free, even if

that involves propagating his faith.

Philip was ordered to leave the country back in April 2016 after authorities decided that the services he was providing at a hospital in eastern Bihar state amounted to "evangelical and subversive activities."

The deportation order for the doctor was issued "on the assumption that such (missionary) activities are against the law of the land" but such assumptions "are fundamentally flawed," the court said. ♦

Latin bishops start office for ecology

India's Latin rite bishops have decided to establish a new office for ecological concerns in line with the universal Church's efforts to pay attention to the works of environmental protection.

The new Commission for Ecology was one of the two officers that Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) decided to establish during their Jan. 4-14 annual meet near Chennai.

The Commission for Small Christian Communities (SCC) was the other new office the bishops started.

The office for Ecology comes as a response Pope Francis's 2015 Encyclical "Laudato Si". The Papal letter appeals to the entire Church "to take care of our universe," said a press note from the conference.

The new Commission was part of the Church's attempt to "embark on a new path to care and protect the environment," the note said.

A Commission for Small Christian Communities was also started to promote the Gospel values at the grass root level and prepare all faithful to witness the compassionate ministry of the Church in their local life situations.

Bishop Alwyn D'Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay was appointed chairman for the Commission for Ecology, while Bishop Ignatius Mascarenhas of Simla-Chandigarh was appointed chairman for the Commission for Small Christian Communities. ♦

Jharkhand's move on tribal people vexes church leaders

Catholic tribal leaders in India are worried over a move by Jharkhand's government to take away tribal status from people who have left their traditional Sarna religion to join other faiths.

The eastern state's move will deprive thousands of tribal people of social benefits meant for their advancement.

"It is a deliberate attempt to divide tribal people on grounds of religion ahead of the state and national elections next year," said Bishop Vincent Barwa of Simdega, who is based in a tribal Christian stronghold.

The state government, run by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), wants the BJP-led federal government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declassify the tribal status of tribal people who have adopted other religions, media reports said.

Secular leader Dev Kumar Dhan, who leads a pan-India group of tribal people following the Sarna religion, said that the government is looking for political gains. On Dec. 3, he presented a memorandum to state governor Draupadi Murmu, a representative of the federal government, asking her to stop the move "to divide tribal people on religious grounds." ♦

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

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Father, you became a great
Evangelist, preaching the
Good News of Christ.
May you help us to know
Him well so that we may
faithfully live our lives as
followers of Christ.
Amen.***

(Feast Day: 25th April)

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