

# PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation

**Mighty  
God!**

**Prince of Peace!**

**King of Kings**

**Lord of Lords!**

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

**Holy Family of Nazareth, make our families  
places of communion and prayer,  
authentic Schools of the Gospel  
and small domestic Churches.**

**2017**

### JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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29	30	31	1 - Mary, Mother of God 26 - Republic Day			

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26	27	28	11 - Our Lady of Lourdes 12 - Holy Childhood day			

### JULY

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26	27	28	29	30	31	15 - Assumption of BVM Independence day

### MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 - Ash Wednesday 20 - St Joseph - Husband of Mary	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	14 - Good Friday 15 - Holy Saturday	16 - Easter Sunday 23 - Divine Mercy Sunday	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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### SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
8 - Nativity of BVM 14 - Triumph of The Cross	15 - Our Lady of Sorrows 24 - Our Lady of Ransom	1	2	3	4	5
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29	30	31	2 - Guardian Angels 7 - Our Lady of Rosary 15 - Mission Sunday			

### MAY

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29	30	31	1 - St Joseph - The Worker 13 - Our Lady of Fatima 28 - Ascension			

### JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4 - Pentecost 11 - Holy Trinity 18 - The Body & Blood of Christ / Corpus Christi	5	6	7	8	9	10
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25	26	27	28	29	30	25 - St Peter The Apostles Day

### NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 - All Saints Day 2 - All Souls Day 26 - Christ The King	3	4	5	6	7	8
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30						

### DECEMBER

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28	29	30	31	8 - Immaculate Conception 25 - Christmas		

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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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**"Let us give thanks to the Father, who has enabled  
us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the  
light. He has rescued us from the power of  
darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of  
his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the  
forgiveness of sins."**

**- Colossians 1:12-14**



## **Being merciful is a life-long task**



The Jubilee Year of Mercy is coming to an end but 'being merciful' continues! Being merciful is not limited to the year but it is life-long, never-ending task. Mercy, in general, is understood as Kindness that makes you forgive someone, usually someone that you have authority over or Compassion shown towards someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm --- eg: Mercy petition to the President, judge. In the Bible, mercy is 'Compassion towards the miserable'. In Hebrew the word is 'Hesed' (Ex 34.6) – Steadfast love, loving kindness, and in Greek: 'Eleos'- Compassion, pity, to show mercy.

Christmas is the reminder of this fact that when God is merciful we too need to be merciful in our turn. Mercy is God's nature; it is his essence. Compassion and love are a 'Quality of God', a quality that God requires of his people --- 'I want mercy not sacrifice'.

The event of incarnation is God's great act of mercy. It is rightly described that the face of God is mercy and the babe of Bethlehem – Jesus, the Son of God --- came into the world as that face of Mercy. His mercy towards the sinful world was such that he did not hesitate to make this supreme sacrifice of losing His Son. The Son is 'God's mercy incarnated', who obeys the Father shows infinite mercy by laying down his life to save us all from eternal damnation.

Mercy neither waits for requests nor expects to get anything in return. The concern and love for the one who is in need and difficulty moves a person to sacrifice and love the other. God's mercy is gratuitous and abundant. It is this mercy that we need to imitate; as Jesus puts it, “Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.” Pope Francis, a few days after assuming office said, “Feeling mercy changes everything. This is the best thing that we can feel, it changes the world. A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just.” (Angelus, March 17, 2013) Mercy makes the world warm and it introduces reconciliation, peace and justice. This only can establish fraternal life.

Pope Francis in his message for World Mission Sunday says: “Go out as missionary disciples, each generously offering our talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family”. By virtue of its missionary mandate the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel”

The Church, through its missionary wing called Pontifical Mission Societies, all over the world is able to carry out acts of mercy because of the generous contribution of the Christian faithful like you. Your help has helped millions of children for their education through supporting schools and for livelihood and shelter through orphanages, children's homes. Several hospitals, old age homes, churches, seminaries, formation houses etc. are helped so that missionaries are formed both spiritually and intellectually to do acts of mercy much more efficiently and effectively.

The 'King of Glory', whose feast we celebrate on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, and the Babe of Bethlehem -- 'Prince of Peace' -- may inspire us to be instruments of mercy that help the world to live in peace and justice. We shall all be missionary disciples of mercy.

**Fr Faustine L Lobo**  
**National Director (PMO-India)**

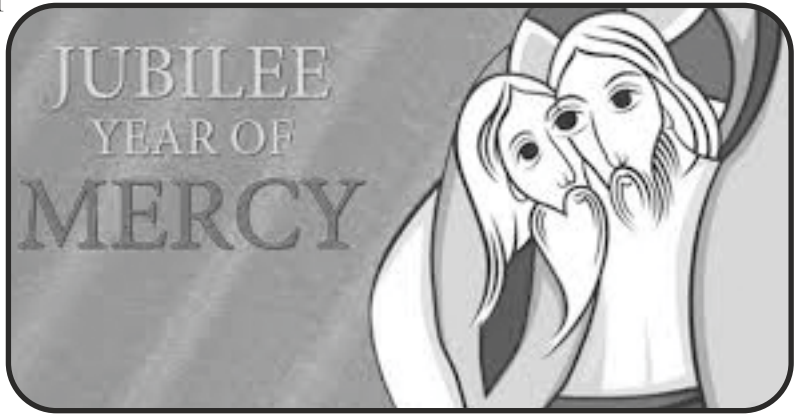


**Lk 6: 36ff**  
**Perfection is merciful love**

*[This is a ZENIT translation of Pope Francis' address at general audience  
on 21 September 2016 at St. Peter's Square.]*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We heard the passage of Luke's Gospel (6:36ff) from which the motto of this Extraordinary Holy Year is taken: Merciful as the Father. The complete expression is: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (v. 36). It is not a slogan for effect, but a commitment of life. To understand this expression well, we can compare it with the parallel one in Matthew's



Gospel, where Jesus says: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48). In the so-called Sermon on the Mount, which opens with the Beatitudes, the Lord teaches that perfection consists in love, fulfillment of all the precepts of the Law. In this same perspective, Saint Luke specifies that perfection is merciful love: to be perfect means to be merciful. Is a person who is not merciful perfect? No! Goodness and perfection are rooted in mercy. God is certainly perfect. However, if we consider Him in that way, it becomes impossible for men to strive to that absolute perfection. Instead, having Him before our eyes as merciful enables us to understand better in what His perfection consists and it spurs us to be like Him, full of love, of understanding and of mercy.

But I wonder: are Jesus' words realistic? Is it really possible to love as God loves and to be merciful as He is?

If we look at the history of salvation, we see that the whole of God's revelation is an incessant and tireless love for men: God is like a father or a mother who loves with unfathomable love and pours it out abundantly on every creature. Jesus' death on the cross is the summit of God's history of love for man. A love that is so great that only God can realize it. It is evident that, compared to this love that has no



measure, our love will always be defective. However, when Jesus asks us to be merciful as the Father, He does not think of the quantity! He asks His disciples to become sign, channels, and witnesses of His mercy.

And the Church cannot but be the sacrament of mercy of God in the world, at all times and towards the whole of humanity. Hence, every Christian is called to be a witness of mercy, and this happens on the path of holiness. We think of the many Saints that became merciful because they let their heart be filled by divine mercy. They gave flesh to the Lord's love, pouring it out on the many needs of

suffering humanity. In this flowering of so many forms of charity it is possible to perceive the reflections of the merciful face of Christ.

We ask ourselves: What does it mean for disciples to be merciful? Jesus explains it with two verbs: “forgive” (v. 37) and “give” (v. 38).

Mercy is expressed, first of all, in forgiveness: “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven” (v.37). Jesus does not intend to subvert the course of human justice,



however, He reminds the disciples that to have fraternal relations it is necessary to suspend judgments and condemnations. Forgiveness, in fact, is the pillar that governs the life of the Christian community, because in it is shown the gratuitousness of the love with which God loved us first. A Christian must forgive! — but why? Because he has been forgiven. All of us who are here, today, in the Square, have been forgiven. No one, in his life, has not been in need of God's forgiveness. And because we have been forgiven, we must forgive. We recite it every day in the Our Father: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,” that is, forgive the offenses, forgive many things, because we have been forgiven so many offenses, so many sins. And so it is easy to forgive: if God has forgiven me, why should I not forgive others? Am I greater than God? This pillar of forgiveness shows us the gratuitousness of the love of God, who loved us first. It is a mistake to judge and condemn a brother that sins, not because one does not want to recognize the sin, but because to condemn the sinner breaks the bond of fraternity with him and scorns God's mercy, who, instead, does not want to give up on any of His children. We do not have the power to condemn our brother who errs; we are not above him: instead we have the duty to restore him to the dignity of a child of the Father and to accompany him on his journey of conversion.

To His Church, to us, Jesus indicates a second pillar: “give.” To forgive is the first pillar; to give is the second pillar. “Give, and it will be given to you ... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (v. 38). God gives well beyond our merits, but He will be even more generous with all those who on earth were generous. Jesus does not say what will happen to those that do not give, but the image of the “measure” constitutes an admonition: with the measure of love we give, it is we ourselves who decide how we will be judged, how we will be loved. If we look well there is a coherent logic: in the measure that one receives from God, one gives to a brother, and in the measure in which one gives to a brother, one receives from God!

Therefore, merciful love is the only way to go. How much need we all have of being more merciful, of not running down others, of not judging, of not “plucking” others with criticisms, envies and jealousies. We must forgive, be merciful, live our life in love. This love enables Jesus' disciples to not lose the identity received from Him, and to recognize themselves as children of the same Father. Thus, in the love they practice in life, that Mercy is reverberated that will have no end (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1-12). But do not forget this: mercy and gift; forgiveness and gift, thus the heart widens, it widens in love. Instead, egoism and anger render the heart small, which hardens like a stone. What do you prefer, a heart of stone or a heart full of love? If you prefer a heart full of love, be merciful! ♦



## Mercy is more than pity and philanthropy

Pope Francis has reminded faithful to make sure they have straight what mercy truly is.

According to Vatican Radio, the Pontiff had done so in a video-message he sent Saturday to the participants of the 14<sup>th</sup> national meeting of the 'Open Hands' gathering in Santa Fe, Argentina, warning that mercy should not be confused for pitying nor philanthropy.

The Christian volunteer organization, *Manos Abiertas* "Open Hands," was founded in 1992 at Villa de Mayo, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, by Jesuit Father Angel Rossi, with the motto "love and serve." The theme of the national event this year was "Mercy: A Trip from the Heart to the Hands."

In his video-message, Pope Francis recalled the parable of the Good Samaritan, and how it exemplifies mercy.

"The heart, which in the Good Samaritan is like that of Jesus, was touched by misery: The misery he saw there, the misery of that widowed mother whom Jesus saw, that misery of pain and the misery of the beaten man who was seen by the Samaritan." When his heart was united with the other's suffering, that, Francis pointed out, was true



mercy.

### *Pitying Is Different*

Mercy, the Pontiff stated, is not the same as pitying.

"When the misery of the other comes into my heart, I feel mercy; which is not the same as to have pity, pity is another feeling," the Pope said.

"I can feel pity when I see a wounded animal or such a situation, but mercy is another feeling," Francis added. "It is when the misery of another, or a situation of pain or misery, gets into my heart, and I permit the situation to touch my heart. I say this: It is an outward journey, the journey of misery to the heart. And this is the path: It is not mercy if it is not of the heart, a heart wounded by the misery of another."

### *Not Mere Philanthropy*

Mercy, the Pontiff also underscored, is not 'mere philanthropy.'

"It is distinct from having good feelings; this is not mercy, it is having good feelings," Pope Francis explained. "It is distinct from hands-on philanthropy, which is not mercy: It is good, it is good, philanthropy is not a bad thing, but it is not mercy, which is another thing."

"Mercy is the journey of misery to my heart, taken up by my heart, that moves my heart; and sometimes it moves so much that the heart



## SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

### Biblical Background - I

*By Fr Dr S Joseph Lionel*



Among the seven sacraments of the Church, the Eucharist receives the central place. Both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians regard Eucharist as the liturgy pure and simple. The Sacrament of Eucharist was entrusted by Christ to his bride, the Church, as spiritual nourishment and as a pledge of eternal life. The Church continues to receive this gift with faith and love. The Church testifies most deeply and comprehensively to its understanding of the Eucharist in the liturgy itself. The celebration of Eucharist itself is a normative witness in the tradition of the Church as acknowledged in the words of St. Paul: “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you...’” (I Cor 11:23-25). No research on the sacrament of Eucharist can exhaust the wealth of resources available in the Scripture and the Tradition concerning this sacrament. That is why volumes and volumes of mystical explanations and research monographs have been written about Eucharist. Such being the case our attempt to explain the sacrament of Eucharist in the next three articles is a humble attempt to highlight only some important aspects that every believer should know about this

sacrament. Therefore, first I will discuss the biblical foundations, second its development in the history, and third the liturgical celebration. We will also briefly deal with the Eucharistic worship outside the Mass.

#### Last Supper

The account of the Last Supper mentioned in the gospels (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:14-23) is normally regarded by all Christian Churches as the historical and theological basis for the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper. However, it is not that simple to come to such a conclusion. This significant narration of the Lord's Supper has to be understood in the background of the loving relationship between God and his people especially through divine initiatives to feed the



people. There is no doubt that this narration of the Last Supper stands out as unique context and as an event proximate to the climax of the history of salvation, namely the redemption through the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Although the Last Supper is much like the meals that Jesus had shared with his disciples, as well as with tax collectors and sinners, it stands as unique due to the new situation that will be brought about by his approaching death and resurrection. It is not simply sharing fellowship with the community of believers, but it is the celebration of the abiding presence of the



Word who became flesh and dwelt among us and the recognition of the real presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of the believing community. Therefore, first, we will try to understand the NT mention of this sacrament in the overall context of Scripture and then examine various texts in the NT writings.

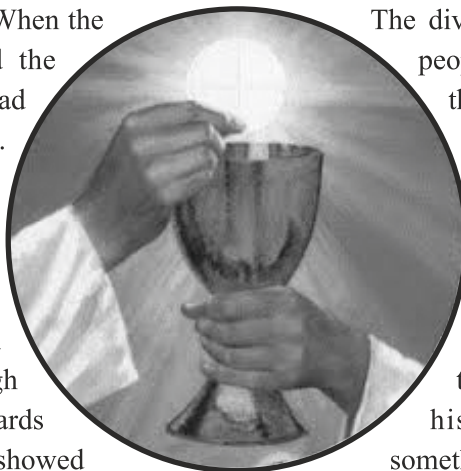
### **The God who nourishes his people**

The OT presents God as the personal God, one who relates with his people with whom he made a covenant. The divine care is manifested to the people through the symbolism of God satisfying the day-to-day needs of the people, such as food and water. It already begins at the story of creation and comes out vividly in the subsequent history of Israel. When God gave his blessing to the humanity, he offered all the fruits of the earth as food for the man (Gen 1:29). When the Israelites grumbled for food the Lord said, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you” (Ex 16:4). When the promise of God was fulfilled, people wondered about the food from heaven for which Moses responded, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat” (Ex 16:16). Through food God showed his love towards the people and they in turn showed their gratitude and thanksgiving through offering the first fruits of the earth. The Levitical liturgy provided detailed descriptions of food offerings. At a number of places the Book of Leviticus mentions that “It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord” (Lev 1:9, see also 1:13, 17, 2:2). Prophet Elijah was strengthened by the food that the Lord provided him (I Kings 17:9). Strengthened by the food Elijah set out on a journey to accomplish the mission that the Lord had entrusted to him, namely

to bear witness against the false prophets (I Kings 19:8). During the time of Prophet Elisha, as per Yahweh's instruction the prophet fed hundred men with twenty loaves (II Kings 4:42-44). The Psalmist praises God for his providence: “He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever” (Ps 111:5). The Psalm also sees food as a sign of God's blessing: “I will bless her with abundant provisions; her poor I will satisfy with food” (Ps 132:15). Prophet Isaiah foresees a messianic banquet with rich food: “On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines” (25:6). We see the fulfillment of these words in the messianic ministry of Jesus.

### **Jesus' compassion towards the people**

The divine compassion in feeding the people of the covenant continued in the life and ministry of Jesus. In Matthew's gospel, when Jesus saw a great multitude of people, he had compassion on them: “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick” (Mt 16:14). He told his disciples “You give them something to eat” (16:16) and then he multiplied five loaves and two fishes and fed five thousand people: “They all ate and were satisfied” (16:20). Although the miracle of multiplication of loaves is mentioned in all the gospels (Mk 8:1-11; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6), John offers a sacramental understanding to the event, that is, Jesus is the bread of life: “For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. ...I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will



# When world deserts you, God remains: Pope

A 'good shepherd' is one who follows Jesus to the very end, even if they are left without money and means and company, and does so without letting oneself become bitter nor resentful.

According to Vatican Radio, this was at the heart of Pope Francis' homily on 18<sup>th</sup> October during his daily morning Mass at his residence Casa Santa Marta.

Drawing inspiration from the Second Letter to Timothy, Francis' homily examined the struggles the Apostles, including Paul, face late in their lives when they had been deserted and left with nothing.

"A l o n e , b e g g i n g , abandoned by all and the victim of fury. But this is the great Paul, the man who heard the voice of the Lord, the call of the Lord!.... who made the Apostles understand that the Lord wants Gentiles to enter into the Church as well," Francis pondered, adding the irony that his life ends "in desolation: not in resentment or bitterness but with an inner desolation."

Peter and St John the Baptist, Francis also stressed, suffered similar privations in the final stage of their lives. The latter, he highlighted, even had his head cut off owing to "the caprice of a dancer and the revenge of an adulterous woman."

More recently, the Jesuit Pope continued, we see the same for Maximilian Kolbe, who created a worldwide apostolic movement and yet died in the prison cell of a death camp.

Faithful apostles, the Holy Father lamented, know they too can expect the same end that Jesus faced.

## ***But Don't Forget***

Despite this sad reality, Francis reminded,

the Lord stays close and does not abandon them and offers them strength.

"This is the Law of the Gospel: if the grain of wheat doesn't die it doesn't produce new seeds" and reminded that a theologian of the early centuries wrote that the blood of martyrs are the seeds of Christians.

"To die in this way like martyrs, as witnesses of Jesus, is the grain that dies and gives rise to new seeds and fills the earth with new Christians. When a pastor lives like this he is not embittered: maybe he feels desolate but he has that certainty that the Lord is beside him.

"When a pastor during his life was attached to other things, rather than to the faithful – for example he was attached to power, money, being part of a clique, to many things – then at his death he won't be alone, maybe his grandchildren (heirs) will be there waiting for him to die so they can see what possessions they can take away with them."

Francis described the attitude of many elderly priests now living in retirement homes who despite their sufferings remain close to the Lord.

"When I go to visit the retirement homes for elderly priests I find so many of these great shepherds who have given their lives for the faithful. There they are, sick, paralyzed, in wheelchairs but you can see them smiling straight away. 'He's well, Lord; he's well, Lord,' because they feel the Lord very close to them. They have these shining eyes and they are asking: 'how is the Church? How is the diocese faring? How are vocations going?' (It's this way) right to the end because they are fathers, because they gave their lives for others."





# What humans can do that angels can't!

By Fr Robert McTeigue, SJ

“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” said Alexander Pope, thereby proving that he understood more about men than he did about angels. Angels cannot fear anything because they cannot be harmed by anything. They are not vulnerable; that is to say, angels are not woundable—unlike human persons. We can do what angels cannot—we can be afraid because we can be wounded; but because we can be afraid, we can be brave. Because we can fear, we can exercise the virtue of bravery by not allowing ourselves to be overcome by our fears. This is a Christian paradox: the pain of our losses and humiliation of our fears can become the roots of a noble bravery that angels can only admire but never achieve.

Humans can suffer wounds and losses. Our bodies can be injured, our fortunes seized, our reputations destroyed. The brave Christian is able to surrender these very real but lesser goods by refusing to yield the greatest good, which is fidelity to God. The brave Christian is willing to suffer pain, loss and even death because of Who God is and because of who we are to God. The truth about God and about us, as well as the meaning of pain and the merits of bravery, is revealed by Jesus. Thomas Merton, in his “No Man Is an Island,” notes: “Suffering is consecrated to God by faith — not by faith in suffering, but by faith in God... Suffering has no power and no value of its own...



Lord,  
Open my eyes, let me see my  
glorious future. Let me see myself  
strong, healthy, powerful, forgiving;  
Thank You Father  
*Amen*

The effect of suffering upon us depends on what we love. If we love only ourselves, suffering is merely hateful... If we love God and love others in him, we will be glad to let suffering destroy anything in us that God is pleased to let it destroy, because we know that all it destroys is unimportant. We will prefer to let the accidental trash of life be consumed by suffering in order that his glory may come out clean in everything we do.” Merton makes clear that for the love of God and for the love of neighbor commanded by God, we must act courageously against sin and evil, starting with the sin that resides in our own heart. I will begin my campaign against sin by first looking in the mirror. I suggest that you do the same. Such active courage is a holy defiance, a disposition to resist evil.

Courage also requires endurance, which is a stubborn and patient unwillingness to relinquish a greater good for a lesser good. Hildegard of Bingen said that “patience is the pillar that nothing can soften.” I add that endurance is the willingness to remain steadfast even in the face of what is dreadful. How different courage is from the illusion of fearlessness! The fearless are either the foolhardy or the fooled. The foolhardy do not understand the risks and plunge ahead thoughtlessly, courting danger unnecessarily. The fooled trust in their own strength --- right up to the moment of the time of trial, when their unjustified trust fails them.

# Priest who found Jesus while among Muslims

One of the first times Father Humblot came into contact with Muslims was seeing the shadow of a “terrorist” during the war in Algeria. He was serving at the time in the French contingent, and the figure was at the end of his gun. He knew he should shoot, but he chose not to pull the trigger and withdrew on tiptoe. The enemy did not shoot either. When he was still a seminarian, he decided to devote his life to the service of Muslims. He became a missionary priest in the Prado association.

While he finished studying theology in Beirut in the early '60s, Father Humblot chose to live in the slum that adjoined the city dump. His neighbors, Lebanese Shiites of southern Lebanon or Syria, were dock workers or worked sorting garbage. Separated from them by a simple sheet of cardboard, he was admitted into this community of poor Muslims, and he shared their work, either in the middle of the city dump or as a longshoreman at the port. His goal was to help seminarians and young priests who wanted to serve the poor not only to contemplate the poverty of Jesus Christ but to share for a few days that of the poor.

## **“I gave the baby a bottle”**

He established a relationship of trust with his neighbors, who knew he was a Catholic priest: “My chapel was out in the open, everyone could see it,” he recalls. One night, the man in the house just next to his called for help: his wife had left, and he did not know how to feed the baby as she had been breast-feeding. ... The priest then boiled a bottle and made a baby bottle out of it. And this is how we could see a French priest giving a small Muslim his milk between two cardboard boxes in a Beirut slum!

## **Koran reading**

When it rained, the inhabitants of the slum met during the night in each other's homes to avoid going out in the muddy streets. They listened to the Koran, gathered around the best reader. Father



Humblot was chosen to read, resulting in another strange scene: a Catholic priest reciting *suras*, especially that of “Maryam,” that he explained to his audience in the light of the Gospels. Two sheiks got wind of the priest's activities and wanted to stop him, but they were driven out by Father Humblot's neighbors who were accustomed to “their” priest.

At the end of his stay, he learned that his activities and his complicity with the local population earned him the distrust of some Muslims, but his neighbors protected him during the June 1968 war with Israel. “During many of my journeys, I was followed by two neighbors who discreetly ensured my protection! I knew nothing at the time.”

## **No animosity**

“I never felt any animosity on the part of the Muslims that I lived with,” says the priest, who spent 45 years in Iran. His troubles came from the political police, who looked askance at his activities as a missionary priest in Tehran and who threatened him to the point that his bishop urged him to leave five years ago. Since 1969,





after learning the language, he did something scandalous: he taught Muslims who wanted to convert to Christianity — and there are many of them — despite the risks!

His neighbors knew it but never reproached him for it. “Once, during the Islamic Revolution, in the volatile atmosphere you can imagine, a group of youths attacked me when I had gone out to shop at the local grocer, ‘This is an American! Let’s get him!’

“I told them I was French. Their answer was: ‘Oh yes, since the Imam Khomeini took refuge in France, all foreigners are French!’

“When we got to the grocer’s who knew me, we continued to debate, and finally the leader of the group offered me a cigarette, a Marlboro! My immediate response was: ‘I do not smoke American — take one of these.’ And I took an Iranian cigarette out of my pocket. The whole gang burst out laughing, and we parted friends.”

### **The Catechism of the Catholic Church translated by ayatollahs**

Later, the priest was invited to the holy city of Qom, where the ayatollahs and other Shiite

leaders are trained. A group of Muslim clerics asked him to check their translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. When Father asked why they had translated it, they replied: “Because we want to present each religion with the official texts of the religion, not according to what we think.”

In the discussion that followed, the Muslim clerics questioned him. “What is the greatest commandment in Christianity?” Father Humblot answered that there was only one commandment: “Love, which encompasses all things. And off we go into a discussion on this one God who is love, not only because he loves us but because he is not remote, solitary and dangerous, overseeing and judging sinners...” he recalls.

This catechism was printed up but then destroyed by the political and religious police but then reprinted on the occasion of the election of the new president. It is on sale in bookstores in Tehran, and the Father often used it to answer catechumens’ questions.

### **“Thanks to the Muslims, I am aware that Jesus is the Son of God”**

Father Humblot continues his dialogue now from Paris through the Internet with Muslims who, in Iran, Afghanistan and Europe, wish to convert to Christianity, and he receives touching testimonies of friendships like that of Amin, an Iranian, who wrote: “I am a Muslim but I like the Catholics because they are respectful of the person and preach love.”

Father Humblot gives thanks to God for having “converted him to Jesus Christ through the Muslims’ attitude.”

He explains: “Raised in a very Christian family, I loved the gospel and considered Jesus my best friend. Until the day when, in the leper colony where often the very sick and suffering prayed and fasted with great submission to the will of God Almighty, I discovered adoration and prostration before Jesus as not only my friend but also the Son of God.” ♦

1197-1253

**St Agnes of Assisi****Feast Day: 19 November**

Younger sister of St Clare and Abbess of the Poor Ladies, born at Assisi, 1197, or 1198; died 1253. She was the younger daughter of Count Favorino Scifi. Her saintly mother, Blessed Hortulana, belonged to the noble family of the Fiumi, and her cousin Rufino was one of the celebrated "Three Companions" of St Francis. Agnes' childhood was passed between her father's palace in the city and his castle of Sasso Rosso on Mount Subasio.

On 18 March 1212, her eldest sister, Clare, moved by the preaching and example of St Francis, had left her father's home to follow the way of life taught by the Saint. Sixteen days later Agnes too went to the monastery of St. Angelo in Panso, where the Benedictine nuns had afforded Clare

temporary shelter, and resolved to share her sister's life of poverty and penance.

At this step the fury of Count Favorino knew no bounds. He sent his brother Monaldo, with several relatives and some armed followers, to St Angelo to force Agnes, if persuasion failed, to return home. Monaldo, beside himself with rage, drew his sword to strike the young girl, but his arm dropped, withered and useless, by his side; others dragged Agnes out of the monastery by the hair, striking her, and even kicking her repeatedly. Presently St Clare came to the rescue, and all of a sudden Agnes's body became so heavy that the soldiers having tried in vain to carry her off dropped her, half dead, in a field near the monastery. Overcome by a spiritual power against which physical force availed not, Agnes's relatives were obliged to withdraw and to allow her to remain with St Clare.

St Francis, who was overjoyed at Agnes's heroic resistance to the entreaties and threats of her pursuers, presently cut off her hair and gave her the habit of Poverty. Soon after, he established the two sisters at St Damian's, in a small rude dwelling adjoining the humble sanctuary which he had helped to rebuild with his own hands. There several other noble ladies of Assisi joined Clare and Agnes, and thus began the Order of the Poor Ladies of St Damian's, or Poor Clares, as these Franciscan nuns afterwards came to be called.

From the outset of her religious life, Agnes was distinguished for such an eminent degree of virtue that her companions declared she seemed to have discovered a new road to perfection known only to herself. In 1219, Agnes, despite her youth, was chosen by St Francis to found and govern a



community of the Poor Ladies at Monticelli, near Florence, which in course of time became almost as famous as St Damian's.

A letter written by St Agnes to Clare after this separation is still extant, touchingly beautiful in its simplicity and affection. Nothing perhaps in Agnes's character is more striking and attractive than her loving fidelity to Clare's ideals and her undying loyalty in upholding the latter in her lifelong and arduous struggle for Seraphic Poverty.

Full of zeal for the spread of the Order, Agnes established from Monticelli several monasteries of the Poor Ladies in the north of Italy, including those of Mantua, Venice and Padua, all of which observed the same fidelity to the teaching of St Francis and St Clare. In 1253 Agnes was summoned to St Damian's during the last illness of St Clare, and assisted at the latter's triumphant death and funeral. On 16 November of the same year she followed St Clare to her eternal reward. Her mother Hortulana and her younger sister Beatrice, both of whom had followed Clare and Agnes into the Order, had already passed away.

The precious remains of St Agnes repose near the body of her mother and sisters, in the church of St Clare at Assisi. God, who had favoured Agnes with many heavenly manifestations during life, glorified her tomb after death by numerous miracles. ♦

**Source:** [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org);  
[www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org); [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

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***Continued from Page 7: Biblical Background - I***

give for the life of the world" (Jn 6:33, 51). John's gospel not only presents Jesus as the bread of life and the one who nourishes the people for everlasting life, but also as the one who entrusts the mission of feeding the people to the care of the apostles:

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

The third time he said to him, "Simon son

of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep (Jn 21:15ff).

The command to "feed my lambs" (v. 15) also indicates the duty entrusted to the universal shepherd. The prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition* goes on to indicate what the bishop must do: feed the holy flock (a biblical image reminding John 21:15-17 and I Peter 3:2), exercise the sovereign priesthood by serving God night and day, offering the gifts of the holy Church [Eucharist], remit sins, and loose bonds, by virtue of the power given to the apostles. ♦

----- **Feedback** <[jlionel@gmail.com](mailto:jlionel@gmail.com)>



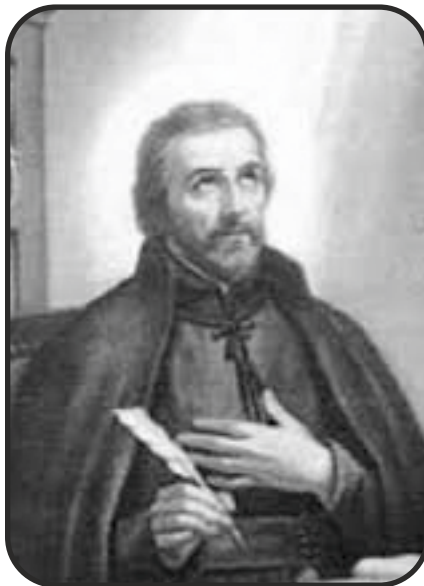
1521-1597

## St Peter Canisius

Feast day: 21 December

This doctor of the church is often called the second Apostle of Germany. Both Holland and Germany claim him as their son, for Nijmegen, where he was born, May 8th, 1521, though a Dutch town today, was at that time in the ecclesiastical province of Cologne and had the rights of a German city. His father, a Catholic and nine times mayor of Nijmegen, sent him at the age of fifteen to the University of Cologne, where he met the saintly young priest, Nicolaus van Esch. It was he who drew Canisius into the orbit of the loyal Catholic party in Cologne, which had been formed in opposition to the archbishop, Hermann von Wied, who had secretly gone over to the Lutherans. Canisius was chosen by the group to approach the emperor, and the deposition of the archbishop which followed averted a calamity from the Catholic Rhineland. Shortly afterwards Peter Canisius met Bd. Peter Faber, one of the first companions of St Ignatius, and made the 'Spiritual Exercises' under his direction. During this retreat he found the answer to the question he had put to himself: how best could he serve God and assist the stricken Catholic Church in Germany?

The energetic life of Peter Canisius should demolish any stereotypes we may have of the life of a saint as dull or routine. Peter lived his 76 years at a pace which must be considered heroic, even in our time of rapid change. A man blessed with many talents, Peter is an excellent example of the scriptural man who develops his talents for the sake of the Lord's work.



He was one of the most important figures in the Catholic Reformation in Germany. His was such a key role that he has often been called the “second apostle of Germany” in that his life parallels the earlier work of St Boniface.

Although Peter once accused himself of idleness in his youth, he could not have been idle too long, for at the age of 19 he received a master's degree from the university at Cologne. Soon afterwards he met Peter Faber, the first disciple

of Ignatius Loyola (July 31), who influenced Peter so much that he joined the recently formed Society of Jesus.

At this early age Peter had already taken up a practice he continued throughout his life—a process of study, reflection, prayer and writing. After his ordination in 1546, he became widely known for his editions of the writings of St Cyril of Alexandria and St Leo the Great. Besides this reflective literary bent, Peter had a zeal for the apostolate. He could often be found visiting the sick or prisoners, even when his assigned duties in other areas were more than enough to keep most people fully occupied.

In 1547 Peter attended several sessions of the Council of Trent, whose decrees he was later assigned to implement. In 1565, the Vatican was looking for a 'secret' agent. It was shortly after the Council of Trent and the pope wanted to get the decrees of the Council to all the European bishops. What would be a simple errand in our day, was a dangerous assignment in the sixteenth century. The

first envoy who tried to carry the decrees through territory of hostile Protestants and vicious thieves



was robbed of the precious documents. Rome needed someone courageous but also someone above suspicion. They chose Peter Canisius.

At 43 he was a well-known Jesuit who had

founded colleges that even Protestants respected. They gave him a cover as official "visitor" of Jesuit foundations. After a brief teaching assignment at the Jesuit College at Messina, Peter was entrusted with the mission to Germany—from that point on his life's work. He taught in several universities and was instrumental in establishing many colleges and seminaries.

He wrote a catechism that explained the Catholic faith in a way which common people could understand—a great need of that age.

Renowned as a popular preacher, Peter packed churches with those eager to hear his eloquent proclamation of the gospel. He had great diplomatic ability, often serving as a reconciler between disputing factions. In his letters (filling eight volumes) one finds words of wisdom and counsel to people in all walks of life. At times he wrote unprecedented letters of criticism to leaders of the Church—yet always in the context of a loving, sympathetic concern.

At 70 Peter suffered a paralytic seizure, but he continued to preach and write with the aid of a secretary until his death in his hometown (Nijmegen, Netherlands) on December 21, 1597. ♦

----- Source: [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org);  
[www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org); [www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com)

◆ *Continued from Page 5: Mercy is more than pity and philanthropy* ◆

becomes like a compass at the North Pole, and does not know where to stop, because of what it feels.”

*Some Advice*

Francis then went on to explain how one can discern whether something is mercy or pity.

“First,” he advised, “you must ask for the grace to have mercy; it is a grace, and we must ask it of the Lord.”

“The only way to have mercy is to yourself recognize your own sin, and be forgiven by the Lord; through recognizing sin and forgiveness. You can be merciful only if you truly feel that you

have received the mercy of the Lord, otherwise you cannot be merciful ... and having received mercy, you will be merciful.”

The Pope then encouraged faithful to let the mercy they've ever received inspire them to bring it to others.

“Stop torturing yourself over what wounded your heart, both by others and yourself,” Francis stressed, concluding, “Let yourself receive mercy and begin the 'return trip,' and with your hands give mercy to others, spreading mercy and love.” ♦

## Bible Quiz - 31

Compiled by Mahesh H Lobo

This Quiz is based on **Psalms 120 - 150**. 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. 30 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 November 2016*.

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.

Study <sup>the</sup> Bible  
with us



01. The Psalmist feels bad that he has dwelt too long among some people. Who are they?
02. If the Lord is your keeper and the shade on your right hand, what will happen to you?
03. According to the Psalmist, what should be the prayerful wish for the peace of Jerusalem?
04. What would have happened to the people if the Lord had not been on their side when men rose against them?
05. What will happen if the sceptre of wickedness doesn't rest on the land allotted to the righteous?
06. If you want to reap with shouts of joy, what must you do?
07. In order to guard the city, the watchman should remain awake. The Psalmist feels that there is a precondition to bring success to the work of the watchman. What is it?
08. If you walk in the way of the Lord, you will be happy and eat the fruit of your labour. What will be the status of your wife?
09. Why has the Lord cut the cords of the wicked?
10. Till when does the Psalmist not want to give sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids?
11. Whatever the Lord pleases he does in heaven and on earth. What does the Lord do with clouds and lightening?
12. If the Psalmist does not remember the Lord, what is the punishment he asks for his tongue?
13. If the darkness is not dark to the Lord, what about the night?
14. The Psalmist prays that he be guarded and preserved from violent men. What have the arrogant men done to the Psalmist?
15. The Psalmist feels that the enemy is pursuing him and crushing his life to the ground. Where has he



made the Psalmist to sit?

16. The Psalmist calls on the Lord to come down and touch the mountains that they may smoke. What further action is he asking from the Lord to scatter and rout his enemies?
17. If the kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom, what about His dominion?
18. The Lord heals the broken hearted and binds up the wounds. What does He do with the stars?
19. How does the Lord make the water flow?
20. If the Lord takes pleasure in his people, what does he do with the humble?

### **Answers to Bible Quiz - 30**

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

(1) thirsty ground, 107:33; (2) bring him to trial, 109:6; (3) with dishonor, 109:29; (04) Melchizedek, 110:4; (05) fear of the Lord, 111:10; (06) barren woman, 113:9; (07) to the sons of men, 115:16; (08) chalice of salvation, 116:13; (09) like the fire of thorns, 118:12; (10) shall not be put to shame, 119:6; (11) laid up thy word in my heart, 119:11; (12) will meditate on his wondrous works, 119:27; (13) will not turn away from thy law, 119:51; (14) the law, 119:61; (15) put to shame, 119:78; (16) perished in his affliction, 119:92; (17) sweeter than honey, 119:103; (18) eyes shed streams of tears, 119:136; (19) endures for ever, 119:160; (20) because he has chosen Lord's precepts. 119:173

### **Winners of Bible Quiz - 30**

Angeline Dodti, Bengaluru; Arun P A, Kolkata; M Gladys, Mangalore; Mary Angeline, Hyderabad; Salvador Coutinha, Malad, Mumbai.

◆ *Continued from Page 9: What humans can do that angels can't!* ◆



How shall we seek after holiness, and to become strong in the strength of the Lord so as to fight actively against evil, and, if need be, resist evil to our last breath and drop of blood? Let's keep it simple.

As one wit once asked, “Do you think Our Lady came to Fatima just to be a tourist?” At Fatima, Our Lady urged upon us penance and the Rosary. We would do well to start there.

We pray the Rosary not because it's a talisman and its prayers a magic formula. We pray the Rosary because it unites us with the Sacred Heart of Jesus

and the Immaculate Heart of Mary—two wounded hearts triumphant over evil!

At the same time, we must unite ourselves with our Eucharistic Lord, both inside and outside of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Pope Benedict XVI said: “Kneeling before the Eucharist is a profession of freedom: those who bow to Jesus cannot and must not prostrate themselves before any earthly authority...”

My gloss on Benedict is this: If we stand at the altar of the Lord with incense, we are less likely to offer a pinch of incense on the altar of Caesar - the idol of tyranny. Or the altar of Mammon - the idol of riches. Or the altar of Baal - the idol demanding the blood of children. Or the altar of public opinion—the idol that makes promises it cannot keep.

Prayer, Penance, Eucharist: taken together they are the foundation upon which the virtue of a truly Christian bravery can grow. They will allow us to answer the summons of Sacred Scripture: “Let the weak say, 'I am a warrior'!” (Joel 3:10) ◆

## Bible Puzzle – 5

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 can post/courier / email your entries to the address provided on Page 1. All entries must reach us by 30 November 2016.

To be considered for completion, one has to answer both A and B correctly. If there is more than one correct answer, the winner will be chosen by lots and will get a copy of the RSV Bible with colour pictures.



A. Bible Scramble of Words: Rearrange the words to get the right names of the persons mentioned in the Bible:

- |            |               |             |            |             |           |
|------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 01. Ulpa   | 02. Bmahara   | 03. Dwaren  | 04. Aahrs  | 05. Ossem   | 06. Utist |
| 07. Jaileh | 08. Laiss     | 09. Henteps | 10. Hiisaa | 11. Atwtmhe | 12. Nohaj |
| 13. Vddia  | 14. Aaznphhie | 15. Aeosh   |            |             |           |

B. For each of the Alphabet in the word given below, provide a name of a person from the Bible and also give reference: B E T H L E H E M

Here is an example:

MOSES --- Martha (Luke 10:38), Obadiah (1Kg 18:3), Solomon (2 Sam 5:14), Eunice (2 Tim 1:5), Simon (Mt 4:18).

### Winner of Bible Puzzle - 4

Christy Anita, Bengaluru

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*Continued from Page 8: When world deserts you, God remains: Pope*

Francis recalled again how Paul realized that as all had deserted him, the only one who always remained at his side was the Lord.

“The Good Shepherd, the shepherd must have this certainty,” Francis stressed, “if he

journeys along the path of Jesus, the Lord will be close to him right to the end.”

Pope Francis concluded, praying, “Let us pray for the shepherds who are at the end of their lives and who are waiting for the Lord to take them with Him. And let us pray so that the Lord may give them strength, consolation and the certainty that, although they feel sick and alone, the Lord is with them, close to them. May the Lord give them this strength.” ♦

**I'M NOT ALONE**

For I know that God is always with me

## The White Elephant

Once upon a time, there lived a herd of eighty thousand elephants at the bottom of the majestic Himalayas. Their leader was a magnificent and rare white elephant who was an extremely kind-hearted soul. He greatly loved his mother who had grown blind and feeble and could not look out for herself.

Each day this white elephant would go deep into the forest in search of food. He would look for the best of wild fruit to send to his mother. But alas, his mother never received any. This was because his messengers would always eat them up themselves. Each night, when he returned home he would be surprised to hear that his mother had been starving all day. He was absolutely disgusted with his herd.

Then one day, he decided to leave them all behind and disappeared in the middle of the night along with his dear mother. He took her to Mount Candorana to live in a cave beside a beautiful lake that was covered by gorgeous pink lotuses.

It so happened that one day, when the white elephant was feeding he heard loud cries. A forester from Benaras had lost his way in the forest and was absolutely terrified. He had come to the area to visit relatives and could not find his way out.

On seeing this big white elephant he was even more terrified and ran as fast as he could. The elephant followed him and told him not to be afraid, as all he wanted to do was to help him. He asked the forester why he was crying so bitterly. The forester replied that he was crying because he had been roaming the forest for the past seven days and could not find his way out.

The elephant told him not to worry as he knew every inch of this forest and could take him to safety. He then lifted him on to his back and carried him to the edge of the forest from where the forester went on his merry way back to Benaras.



On reaching the city, he heard that King Brahmadutta's personal elephant had just died and the King was looking for a new elephant. His heralds were roaming the city, announcing that any man who had seen or heard of an elephant fit for a King should come forward with the information.

The forester was very excited and immediately went up to the King and told him about the white elephant that he had seen on Mount Candorana. He told him that he had marked the way and would require the help of the elephant trainers in order to catch this fantastic elephant.

The King was quite pleased with the information and immediately dispatched a number of soldiers and elephant trainers along with the forester. After travelling for many days, the group reached the lake besides which the elephants resided. They slowly moved down to the edge of the lake and hid behind the bushes. The white elephant was collecting lotus shoots for his mother's meal and could sense the presence of humans. When he looked up, he spotted the forester and realized that it was he who had led the King's men to him. He was very upset at the ingratitude but decided that if he put up a struggle many of the men would be killed. And he was just too kind to hurt anyone. So he decided to go along with them to Benaras and then request the benevolent King to be set free.

That night when the white elephant did not



return home, his mother was very worried. She had heard all the commotion outside and had guessed that the King's men had taken away her son. She



was scared that the King would ride him in to battle and her son would definitely be killed. She was also worried that there would be no one to look after her or even feed her, as she could not see. She just lay down and cried bitterly.

Meanwhile her son was led in to the beautiful city of Benaras where he was given a grand reception. The whole city was decorated and his own stable was gaily painted and covered with garlands of fragrant flowers. The trainers laid out a feast for their new state elephant who refused to touch a morsel. He did not respond to any kind of stimuli, be it the fragrant flowers or the beautiful and comfortable stable. He just sat there looking completely despondent.

The worried trainers went straight to report the situation to their King, as they were scared that the elephant would just waste away without any food or water. The King was extremely concerned when he heard what they had to say and went to the stable himself. He offered the elephant food from the royal table and asked him why he grieved in this manner. He thought that the elephant should be proud and honored that he was chosen as the state elephant and would get the opportunity to serve his King.

But the white elephant replied that he would not eat a thing until he met his mother. So the King asked him where his mother was. The elephant replied that she was back home on Mount

Candorana and must be worried and hungry as she was blind and had no one to feed her and take care of her. He was afraid that she would die.

The compassionate King was touched by the elephant's story and asked him to return to his blind, old mother and take care of her as he had been doing all along. He set him free in love and kindness. The happy elephant went running home as fast as he could. And he was relieved to find that his mother was still alive. He filled his trunk with water and poured it over his sick mother who thought that it was raining. Then she cried out as she thought that some evil spirit had come to harm her and wished and prayed that her son was there to save her.



The white elephant gently bent over his blind mother and stroked her lovingly. She immediately recognized his touch and was overjoyed. Her son lifted her up and told her that the kind and compassionate King of Benaras had set him free and he was here to love and look after his mother forever.

His mother was absolutely thrilled and blessed the kind King with peace, prosperity and joy till the end of his days. She was so thankful to him for sending her son back home. The white elephant was able to take good care of his mother till the day she died. And when he died himself, the King erected a statue of him by the side of the lake and held an annual elephant festival there in memory of such a caring and noble soul.

**Moral: Always give affection and care to our dear ones. Always respect others' feelings. ♦**

## Dinner with a father



A son took his old father to a restaurant for an evening dinner. Father being very old and weak, while eating, dropped food on his shirt and trousers. Other diners watched him in disgust while his son was calm.

After he finished eating, his son who was not at all embarrassed, quietly took him to the wash room, wiped the food particles, removed the stains, combed his hair and fitted his spectacles firmly.

When they came out, the entire restaurant was watching them in dead silence, not able to grasp how someone could embarrass themselves publicly like that. The son settled the bill and started walking out with his father.

At that time, an old man amongst the diners called out to the son and asked him, “Don't you think you have left something behind?”.

The son replied, “No sir, I haven't”.

The old man retorted, “Yes, you have! You left a lesson for every son and hope for every father”.

The restaurant went silent.

**Moral: To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors. We all know how our parents cared for us for every little thing. Love them, respect them, and care for them. ♦**

### Salesian nuns open new convent in Odisha

ZENIT.ORG: At the invitation of the local Church, the Salesian Sisters, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, have opened a house in the state of Orissa, where as many as 50,000 Christians were displaced in a series of attacks, which occurred seven years ago this month.

Fides reported that the convent opened in the Kandhamal district, which is located in the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar.

The 2008 violence at the hands of Hindu extremists resulted in the deaths of some 100 Christians and the destruction of 300 churches. The violence began after the Aug. 23 assassination of a Hindu political leader, which was blamed on Christians.

At the inauguration of the convent, Fides reported, Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar welcomed the nuns and expressed his wishes for a “fruitful ministry for the building of the Kingdom of God.”

The ceremony was attended by more than 1,500 faithful among nuns, priests, lay people, but also local civil servants, Hindus and those of other religions.

“God has given us a very special gift in this year's celebration of the bicentennial of the birth (1815-2015) of our Father and Founder Don Bosco. A dream come true,” said Sister Rose Ezarath FMA, provincial superior.

St John Bosco's birthday, Aug. 16, was the official beginning of the mission.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians will dedicate themselves in particular to young people and poor families by promoting educational activities and professional training. ♦

### **New bishops appointed**

#### **Diocese of Jowai**

Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Victor Lyngdoh of Nongstoin as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Jowai.

At the same time, the Holy Father has appointed Archbishop Dominic Jala, SDB, of Shillong, as Apostolic Administrator “sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis” of the Diocese of Nongstoin.

Bishop Victor Lyngdoh was born on 14 January 1956 in Wahlang, Archdiocese of Shillong, and was ordained priest on 25 January 1987. He was elected Bishop of Nongstoin on 28 January 2006 and consecrated on 2 April 2006.

#### **Diocese of Gwalior**

Pope Francis has also appointed Fr Thomas Thennatt of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (SAC) as the new bishop to the Diocese of Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh. The 63-year old priest takes over from Bishop Joseph Kaithathara, who has retired.

Fr Thennatt is currently parish priest at Mankapur in the Archdiocese of Nagpur and President of the Pastoral Commission of the SAC Nagpur Province.

The bishop-elect was born on November 26, 1953, in Koodalloor in the Diocese of Kottayam, Kerala. He was ordained a priest on October 21, 1978. He has served in parishes in the dioceses of Amravati, Eluru, Hyderabad, Indore, Jhabua and Nagpur. ♦

### **Pope Francis' India trip quasi-sure**

Rome [UCANINDIA]: Pope Francis has said that he is planning to visit Portugal, India, and Bangladesh in 2017.

The pope revealed his travel plans during a lengthy press conference aboard the papal flight back to Rome on Oct 2 after a weekend visit to Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The trip to Portugal, Francis said, would likely be brief and only to Fatima, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the famous apparition of Mary, May 13.

The pontiff said the India and Bangladesh trip is “quasi-sure.”

If Pope Francis visits India, it would be the fourth papal visit to India and he would be the third pope to visit the country.

Pope Paul VI had visited what was then Bombay in 1964 for the International Eucharistic Congress. In 1986, Pope John Paul II visited India on a 10-day trip that covered 14 cities across the country. In November 1999, Pope John Paul II again visited India - this time on a short visit to New Delhi, which was met with protests from right-wing Hindu groups and adverse media commentaries.

In March this year, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India officials had said that they have invited the Pope to India and also asked Prime Minister Modi to formally invite the Pope.

The Pope is both the leader of the Catholic Church and the head of the state of Vatican City, and needs invitations both from the Church and the government of a country to contemplate visiting it, according to papal protocol.

He also said he is hoping to visit Africa but is unsure about which country as “it depends on the political situations and wars there.”

He also said he is still considering a trip to Colombia following the historic peace agreement between the government and FARC rebels there, but wanted to wait until everything was “locked-up” or



"when everything is sure, sure, sure" for the success of the peace deal.

Father Mauricio Rueda Beltz, papal trip planner, and Greg Burke, the new Vatican spokesman, were present at the 50-minute conference.

Other than his upcoming trips abroad, the Pope was asked about the US election campaign. He advised U.S. Catholics voting in November's presidential election to study the proposals of the candidates well, to pray about it, and then "choose in conscience".♦

## **Awaiting the Pope as Messenger of Peace**

Bangalore (Agenzia Fides): "We await the Pope as a messenger of peace, while the nation is experiencing a period of crisis in Kashmir. It would be a blessing for the country": says Fr Faustine Lobo, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Organisation, to Fides.

"We await him as a grace for India. After the canonization of Mother Teresa, it would be another important moment for us. We feel the urgency of peace, while the escalation in Kashmir worries many. The Pope reminds us that only peace is holy and that there is no God of War", notes the director.

As for the internal situation of the Indian Church, "with his presence the Pope would come to remind all of society, sometimes crossed by hate ferments towards religious minorities, that Indian Catholics live and work only for the common good of the country" said Fr Lobo..

According to Fides sources, the necessary steps for the arrival of the Pope have been carried out. Last April, a delegation led by Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, president of the Indian Bishops' Conference, asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to write an official letter of invitation to Pope Francis. The Cardinal had also confirmed that he had himself invited the Pope to visit India. The last Pope to visit India was John Paul II who in February 1986 landed in Goa.♦

## **Card Toppo to be Spl Envoy to FABC**

Ranchi [UCAN]: Pope Francis has named Cardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi, as his Special Envoy to the XI Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (fabc), taking place from Nov 28 to Dec 4 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The theme for the 11th Plenary Assembly is "Joy of the Gospel and the Family in Asia in the Light of the Synod."

The Plenary Assembly is the supreme body of the FABC, where all committees and officers are answerable to it. The Plenary Assembly meets in ordinary session every four years.

The 10th Plenary Assembly of the FABC was held in Dong Nai, Vietnam, in 2012 December and Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales of Manila was the Papal legate to the Assembly.

Membership of the Plenary Assembly comprise of all presidents of member conferences or their officially designated episcopal alternates and bishop-delegates elected by member conferences.♦

## **"Couples for Christ" in Odisha**

Bhubaneswar [UCAN]: Catholics from indigenous communities in the eastern Indian state of Odisha are looking to the Couples for Christ lay movement to strengthen their family and faith life.

The Vatican-approved lay movement began their unit in Odisha's main Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Archdiocese in 2013.

"Most parish priests who have seen the difference in couples have started units in their own parishes," said Hector Poppen, leader of the movement in India.

Poppen along with his wife Garnet and a team from the Philippines conducted a week-long program Sept 13-18 in the state capital Bhubaneswar focusing on evangelization, renewal of families and caring for the poor.

The movement has taken hold in Kandhamal district, where more than 70 percent of some 50,000 Catholics of the archdiocese live. Majority of them are indigenous people depending on farming in the hilly district.

The movement began in the area five years after a major wave of anti-Christian violence hit the area killing some 100 Christians and displacing thousands.

Suchita Toppo, who belongs to the Oraon tribe and who attended the retreat in Bhubaneswar, said the movement has helped her "renew and enrich the responsibility and unity in married life."

A Tikey, from the same tribe and member of the movement in Odisha, told ucanews.com that Couples for Christ gave him "an opportunity to know that Christ is the head of the family" and that "the blessings for life are possible only through Christ."

Denzil D'Cunha, a member of the movement in Odisha, said the retreats and other programs made "a great change" in his prayer life. It helped him realize "family life should build up a strong relationship with God."

Couples for Christ programs include retreats, household prayer meetings and monthly prayer assemblies.

The movement that began in Manila in 1981 stresses renewal of Catholic parish life working through couples. The movement now works in some 100 countries including India.♦

## **Kosovo's 'Crypto-Catholics' making their way back to Church**

ZENIG.ORG: Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008, is home to a little known remarkable community of "crypto-Catholics." Though considered Muslims, their roots, are in Catholicism. Their stories go back hundreds of years: in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, conquering Ottomans forced the region's population to convert to Islam. Most complied to avoid discrimination — but in their hearts they remained Christian. The majority hailed from the region of Rugova, which was the childhood home of the late former president of Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova. It is public knowledge that he was baptized shortly before his death; he also gave a plot of land to the Church in the heart of the capital city of Pristina, where now stands the new Cathedral of St Mother Teresa.

There are some 50,000 regular Catholics in the fledgling nation, whose population of 1.9 million is largely Muslim. However, a growing number of Muslims, especially young people, are discovering their Christian roots and are joining the Church, which "expects these young people to spread their faith in their personal networks and later on within their families.

Father Marjan Uka is a Kosovo priest charged with looking after the newly baptized 'crypto-Catholics.' He has to make do with very little funding from the Church, relying on aid agencies instead. Mass stipends are one form of income. Adnan (not his real name) is one of the priests' charges. Along with his wife and two children, he was recently baptized.

Veton, a small business owner in the same village, said that "before the Ottomans Islamicized the region of today's Balkans, we were Christians." Veton has never been to a mosque and was never religious. He is currently taking catechism classes, but is not sure if his adult children will make the step with him. "Their friends may not understand," he said. ♦



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