

Vol 44, No. 6

November - December 2021

# PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

**Look, the virgin shall conceive  
and bear a son, and they shall  
name him Emmanuel,  
which means, God is with us.**

**- Mt. 1:23**



## **Pope Francis** during the homily in the opening Mass of the Synod.

*"Every encounter, as we know, calls for openness, courage and a willingness to let ourselves be challenged by the presence and the stories of others."*



*"This is a time to look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say, to build rapport, to be sensitive to the questions of our sisters and brothers."*

*"Keep us from becoming a 'museum church,' beautiful but mute, with much past and little future."*

*"Listen to the questions, concerns and hopes of every church, people and nation."*

*"Let us ask: in the church, are we good at listening? How good is the hearing of our heart? Do we allow people to express themselves, to walk in faith even though they have had difficulties in life, and to be part of the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged?"*

### ***Prayer for the Synod***

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.*

*With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.*

*We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.*

*Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.*

*All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.*

WISHING YOU ALL

***a Merry  
Christmas***

***&***

***a Prosperous  
New Year***

***2022***

## PROCLAIM

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### Printer:

James Arts Crafts  
Sivakasi – 626189  
☎ 9789774520

### Subscription rates: (six issues/year)

Inclusive of postal charges for  
Subscribers in India.

Annual: ₹ 150

3 years: ₹ 400

Annual bulk subscription

(i.e., 20 or more copies): ₹ 125

DONORS: ₹ 5000 (for 15 years)

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information published.

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### St Francis Xavier

07 April 1506 - 03 December 1552



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

# Incarnation: Communion, Participation and Mission

The XVI ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops has been convoked by Pope Francis. It will be held in October 2023. It was officially declared open on 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> October 2021 in Rome and, after a week, in all the dioceses of the world. Synod normally consists of selected/limited members. It is either convoked by the Pope for the universal Church or by the Bishops to discuss some important issues concerning mission in their respective dioceses.

Unlike other synods, synod 2023 is something special for different reasons.

The first reason is the title itself, which is entitled as “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.” Synodality means the involvement and participation of the entire church without excluding anyone. Therefore, the synod is convoked to discuss the synodal nature of the Church itself. The primary mission is to understand and actualize the notion of journeying together.

Secondly, the discussion, true to the title, involves all the people of God – from every parish, every diocese, every nation, and every continent. All discuss at various levels, how we could “journey together” as the members of the Church in living the Gospel and proclaiming it. In other words, every member of the Church is considered an important and valuable asset of the Church and not simply some selected members.

For now, I would like to insist that we get the notion of ‘journeying together’ from the incarnation of the Lord himself. Let me explain.

At the completion of the second year of Covid -19, we could very well say that certain terms have become overused in our conversations and thus have become words of fear and depression. One such term is ‘social distance’. The notion of ‘social distancing’ was deeply nailed in our head that we were initially afraid of our own shadow, though it might seem an exaggeration. By now, social distancing has become the norm of the day and it has become part of ourselves that even unconsciously we keep the distance. In fact, many of us even love it since it reduces the responsibility of showing concern for others.

The sin of the first parents distanced them first from God and then from each other. Sin does not even allow us to see the beloved, our Father. They hid themselves from the sight of the Lord, for they did not want to see God. The original sin actually caused the division between God and humanity. The ‘distance’ became so wide and deep that we needed something *extraordinary*; we needed God Himself to repair the damage caused by us. Therefore He had to come down to earth and He Himself had to bridge the gap to bring back communion with one another and with God.

Therefore Christmas is a celebration of joy because God has shown to us that He enjoys communion with humanity. He does not like the distance or the gap that is created by human frailty. And yet by journeying with humanity and thus participating in human suffering and life, Jesus has shown that he likes communion, participation and that was his life mission.

Synod 2023 recognises that as the Church we need to journey together with one another as Jesus himself journeyed with us in his incarnation and that we need to participate in the life of other members however and whoever they are. That is the message of this Christmas and of this Synod 2023.

**Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu**  
**National Director (PMO-India)**





# No Christmas without Bethlehem

By Fr John Rose



Christmas is a time of joy --- all our thoughts are focused on the beautiful gift of child Jesus whom God had given. To those who live in darkness a great light has appeared in Bethlehem and to those who abide in the valley of death, a new hope for eternal life has dawned from the manger in Bethlehem. Therefore friends, sing aloud along with angels: “Glory to God in the highest and peace to people of good will on earth; for unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given.”

After the angels left, the shepherds said to one another, “Come, let us go to Bethlehem and see the things that have happened there which the Lord has told us.”

My dear brothers and sisters, let us also go to the Bethlehem and see what the Lord has done for us. Let us briefly consider three questions regarding Bethlehem:

- Why Bethlehem?
- Where is Bethlehem?
- And what did God do at Bethlehem?

## Why Bethlehem?

Bethlehem was a small village, five miles away from Jerusalem. *Bethlehem* means *house of bread*. It certainly was not as glorious and splendid as Jerusalem where the temple of the Lord stood, yet Bethlehem was a small town dear to every Israelite. A number of events clustered around this little town, which

endeared it to every Jew.

The first mention of Bethlehem is found in Gen 35:16, and it is a very sorrowful one. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob for whom he labored for 14 years to win, had died and was buried there. We read when Jacob and his family journeyed through Bethlehem, Rachel was in birth pangs. When she was in hard labour, as her soul was departing, she gave birth to her son whom she called *Benoni*, a child of sorrow; but her husband called him *Benjamin*, meaning *son of my right hand*. When Rachel died, he buried her in Bethlehem.

Isn't this incident, which took place 1800 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, very prophetic? Might not have Mary called her son Jesus Benoni, a man of sorrow? Simon said to Mary, “a sword shall pierce through your heart”. While Mary may call her son a child of sorrow, what did his Father call Him? Benjamin, son of my right hand. As a man Jesus was Benoni, a man of sorrow, but as God, Jesus was Benjamin, the Son of God's right hand.

Another woman who made Bethlehem celebrated was Ruth, the great grandmother of



King David, a woman from Moab. Although she was not a Israelite, she followed her mother-in-law Naomi and settled in Bethlehem. It was in Bethlehem, Ruth met her husband Boaz and

married him; it was in Bethlehem her son Obed was born. And Obed became the father of Jesse and Jesse became the father of David, who too was born in Bethlehem, thus Bethlehem became the royal city.

**L**ittle as Bethlehem was, it is to be esteemed high, for it is here that Israel's greatest King David was born, and it is here that Jesus, the King of Kings, was also born.

### **Where is Bethlehem?**

I don't mean to ask the geographical location of Bethlehem. That everyone knows.

I just ask about the spiritual position of Bethlehem. Where can we find Bethlehem and how can we reach there?

Five hundred years before Jesus, prophet Micah prophesied and said: "But you, O Bethlehem, who are of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is the ruler of Israel (5:2). Bethlehem was a simple village, but God had exalted it by making it the birthplace of Christ. Bethlehem is the exaltation of the humble and the lowly in spirit. Bethlehem is where humility is. Bethlehem is where simplicity is; Bethlehem is where good is; and Christ is always born there.

Christ is always found among the little ones. In Is 57:15, the Lord says: "I dwell with him who is humble and contrite in spirit and who trembles at my word." God always dwells with the humble of heart and lowly of spirit.

Many of us who are today sitting over here may be truly called the humble Bethlehem. We may be little known around; we don't have a great name to boast about nor do we have a great ancestry to flaunt. But my friends, take it from me, Christ is born for you and for me. For the Lord said, "I dwell with the humble and contrite in

spirit".

### **What did the Lord do at Bethlehem?**

In that humble village of Bethlehem something great, something mysterious, something divine happened. The Word became flesh, In the darkness of midnight, amidst the howling of the hyenas and the bleating the sheep, in a remote area, the Saviour was born God, who was immortal, took upon himself our mortality. That is what happened in Bethlehem.

On Christmas eve a Child was born, a Son of was given. True.

But the question is, is he born unto me? Christ was born in Bethlehem, yet he was not born unto King Herod. Christ was born in Bethlehem, yet he was not born unto the chief priests and scribes who resided in Herod's palace.

Christ may be born a hundred times in Bethlehem, but what does it profit if he is not born unto you and unto me. The birth of Christ is beautiful and beneficial only to those who accept him and recognize him at his coming, like the Three Kings and the Shepherds. Christ is the Saviour not to all those who celebrate Christmas; Christ is the Saviour not to all those who bear his name. Christians. Christ becomes the Saviour only



# Synodal Church

## Walking together, listening to one another

*By Robin Gomes*

Pope Francis lead a moment of reflection in the Vatican, a day ahead of the solemn inauguration, on 10 October, of the Synod with a Holy Mass in St Peter's Basilica.

The pope invoked the Holy Spirit on the People of God so that they will be able to move forward together, to listen to one another and discern our times, in solidarity with the struggles and aspirations of all humanity.

### A special Synod

The theme of the 16th Synod of Bishops is: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission". Synodality indicates walking together and listening to one another but above all to the Holy Spirit. To deepen this essential characteristic of the Church, the upcoming synod is unlike any previous one. It starts with, and involves all the faithful at local Churches across the world, promising to listen to all, especially to lay people. That is why this Synod is a 2-year process, from October 10, 2021, to October 2023.

The diocesan listening phase will run until April 2022 and will be followed by a continental phase from September 2022 to March 2023. The final "universal Church phase" will culminate in the traditional assembly of the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican in October 2023.



### The protagonist of the Synod – the Spirit

In his discourse at Saturday's moment of prayer and reflection, Pope Francis dwelt on how the synodality of the Church is achieved, namely, through

participation, and mission. He also pointed out the dangers it can run into, as well as the opportunities it offers.

"In the one People of God, therefore, let us journey together, in order to experience a Church that receives and lives this gift of unity, and is open to the voice of the Spirit," Pope Francis said, stressing that the Synod is an "ecclesial moment", not a parliament or an investigation into opinions, but "an ecclesial moment" whose protagonist is the Holy Spirit. "Without the Spirit, there is no Synod," he stressed.

### Communion, participation, mission

Explaining the Synod's three key words -





communion, participation, and mission – he said that communion and mission describe the mystery of the Church. Communion expresses the very nature of the Church, according to the Second Vatican Council.

According to Saint Paul VI “communion, that is, cohesion and interior fullness, in grace, truth and collaboration... and mission, that is, apostolic



commitment to the world of today”. Saint John Paul II stressed that *koinonia* gives rise to the Church’s mission of serving as a sign of the human family’s intimate union with God.

For this reason, Pope Francis said, Synods must be well prepared for, especially at the local level with the participation of all.

### **All are called to participate**

He pointed out that ‘communion’ and ‘mission’ can risk remaining somewhat abstract, unless synodality is concretely expressed at every step of the synodal journey and activity, encouraging real involvement on the part of each and all”. “All the baptized are called to take part in the Church’s life and mission.”

He acknowledged the frustration and impatience felt by many pastoral workers, members of diocesan and parish consultative bodies, and women, who frequently remain on the fringes. “Enabling everyone to participate is an essential ecclesial duty!” he stressed, adding, it is an indispensable ecclesial commitment based on the “identity card” of the baptism.

### **Three risks to avoid**

The Pope warned that a Synod can run the risk of being a mere formal external event, instead of being “a process of authentic spiritual discernment that we undertake, not to project a good image of ourselves, but to cooperate more effectively with the work of God in history”. For this, “we need content, means, and structures that can facilitate dialogue and interaction within the People of God, especially between priests and laity”.

He noted that at times there is a type of “elitism” among the clergy that distances them from the laity, which makes them the “lord of the house” and not a shepherd. This, the Pope said, requires changing certain overly vertical, distorted, and partial visions of the Church, the priestly ministry, the role of the laity, ecclesial responsibilities, roles of governance, and so forth.

Another risk that a Synod can run into is becoming intellectual, offering learned but abstract approaches to the problems of the Church and the evils in our world, which are far removed from the reality of the holy People of God and the concrete life of communities around the world.

A third danger that a Synod should avoid, the Pope said, is the temptation to complacency, which says, we have always done it this way” and it is better not to change. The word ‘complacency’ “is a poison in the life of the Church”. People with such an attitude apply old solutions to new problems. The Holy Father stressed that the synodal process should involve the local Churches, in different phases and from the bottom up, in an exciting and engaging effort that can forge a style of communion and participation directed to mission”.

### **Three opportunities**

Pope Francis pointed out that the synodal process of encounter, listening, and reflection help the People of God, the Church, to recognize at least

# Synod will help Church become more discerning

*By Christopher Lamb*



In his homily at the Holy Mass to inaugurate the synod, Pope Francis stressed that the synod is not a “Church convention”, parliament, study group or political gathering but a “grace-filled event” that can become a “process of healing guided by the Holy Spirit”.

The synod, he explained, is not about “pre-packaged ideas” but embracing a different path of the Church, one which is more discerning, more in tune with the Gospel and better at listening.

“Let us not soundproof our hearts; let us not remain barricaded in our certainties,” the Pope said. “So often our certainties can make us closed. Let us listen to one another.”

Today’s liturgy in the Basilica was attended by dozens of cardinals, bishops and diplomats accredited to the Holy See along with representatives from across the world. They had gathered in the Vatican yesterday for an initial meeting to begin the synod process.

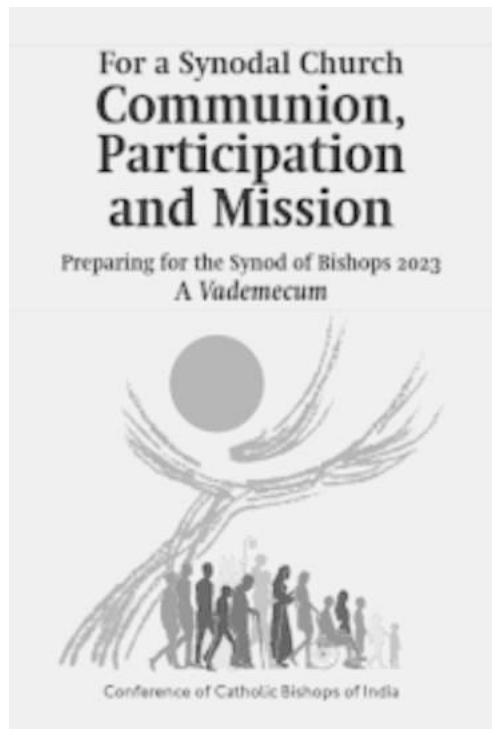
As shots of morning sunlight beamed through Michelangelo’s dome, prayers were said in Chinese, Arabic, Portuguese and Tagalog including for “all the baptised” to “sense the urgency to actively participate in announcing the Kingdom of God”.

“God is not found in neat orderly places, distant from reality, but...he meets us where we are, on the often rocky roads of life,” the Pope said. “Today, as we begin this synodal process, let us begin by asking ourselves – all of us, Pope, bishops, priests, religious and laity – whether we, the Christian community embody this style of God, who travels the paths of history and shares in the life of humanity.”

Synodal reforms have taken on an urgency due to the clerical sexual abuse crisis with Germany, Australia and Ireland all announcing synod processes in the wake of abuse scandal inquiries that exposed institutional and cultural failings.

The synods are frequently referred to as a remedy for clericalism, an attitude of excessive deference to the clergy who in turn assume a position of moral superiority. The Pope has described clericalism as a “cancer” in the Church and diagnosed the misuse of power as the root cause of the abuse crisis.

“If at times we would rather take refuge in formality or presenting the proper image – the clerical and courtly spirit, where I am Monsieur l’abbé than Father – the experienced of encounter changes us,”





the Pope said. “Jesus did not hurry along, or keep looking at his watch to get the meeting over. He was always at the service of the person he was with, listening to what he or she had to say.”

But the journey to a more synodal Church faces numerous obstacles including apathy, resistance and opposition from bishops while along with the delicate navigation of trying to encourage a renewal effort where the outcomes are unclear.

Reflecting on the Gospel passage of the rich man, who observes the commandments but is unwilling to sell his possessions and follow Jesus, the Pope pointed out that the Church is called to more than the “mere observance of precepts” or religious observances.

“In these days, Jesus calls us, as he did the rich man in the Gospel, to empty ourselves from all that is worldly, including our inward-looking and outworn pastoral models, and to ask what it is that God wants to say to us at this time,” the Pope said.

Faith, he told the crowd gathered in St Peter’s

Square during his Angelus address after the Mass, cannot be “commercial and mechanical” with the belief that “I do this, so that God will give me that.” Instead, the Pope said, it is saying “yes” to God without a “but.”

The synod process will culminate with the 2023 assembly of bishops in Rome, but it is now likely the process will stretch on beyond the two-year time frame.

In a significant intervention a day before the inauguration of the synod, Cardinal Mario Grech, the leader of Rome's synod office, suggested that the final document produced by that 2023 meeting could then be handed to local churches rather than presented to Francis. The Maltese cardinal asked whether Catholics across



the world, along with their bishops, to give their “consent” to the document before it goes back to the Pope.

---- **The Tablet** ♦

♦ ***Continued from Page 4: No Christmas without Bethlehem***

to those who accept him, believe in him and surrender their lives to him.

Sir James Simpson has made a number of scientific discoveries including the anesthetic property of chloroform. He became world-famous in 1847. One day, when Sir James Simpson was old and was lecturing, one of the students asked him, “Sir what is your greatest discovery?” The scientist answered, “The greatest discovery I have ever

made was: I am a great sinner, and Jesus Christ is my great Saviour.”

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray tonight that all of us who are assembled here to celebrate the birth of the Messiah may make that same discovery --- that we are all great sinners, but Jesus Christ is our great Saviour.

---- **John’s Sunday Homilies (ATC Publications)**♦



# Church is missionary by nature

Catechesis by Pope John Paul II on the Church



1. Being essentially missionary does not mean merely that the Church has a universal mission to all humanity. It means that in her constitutive reality, in her soul, and thus it could be said in her very “psychology,” she possesses a dynamism that concretely unfolds in preaching the Gospel, in spreading the faith and in calling to conversion. All this is proclaimed “to the very ends of the earth.” This interior drive, intimately linked to her mission, comes from the Holy Spirit and is therefore part of her mystery. The dynamism that comes from it is thus expressed as a distinctive characteristic of the whole Church. This is shown in a concrete and effective way especially in those who, starting with the apostles, go to regions far from their land for the sake of the Gospel. Even if all are not called personally to go to mission lands, each one in the Church and with the Church has the task of spreading the light of the Gospel, according to the saving mission passed on by the Redeemer to the ecclesial community. Indeed, all are called to cooperate in this mission.

2. We must insist on deepening the trinitarian origin of this missionary dynamism, to which the Decree *Ad Gentes* refers (cf. nn. 2, 3, 5). This

dynamism flows from the “fountain-like love,” that is, from the “love of God the Father,” from “his great and merciful kindness.” He is the God who creates us and “gratuitously calls us to share in his life and in his glory.” He “pours out his divine goodness” in order to be “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28). It is from his infinite generosity destined for every creature that the Church’s missionary movement stems as the Holy Spirit’s gift, a movement committed to spreading the message of salvation in the world.

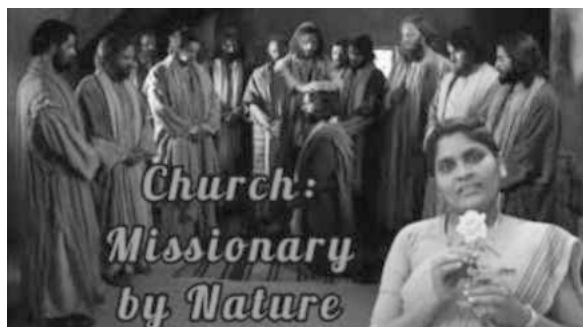
3. The dynamism of divine life was first communicated in the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God, sent by the Father to bring mankind revelation and salvation. The coming into the world of the Word made flesh (cf. Jn 1:14) can be considered a “type” or “archetype”—as the Fathers would say—of the Church’s missionary drive. Going beyond the frontiers of ancient Israel, it extends the kingdom of heaven to all humanity. This drive is carried out in particular by the “leap” of missionaries, who, like the apostles, leave their native countries to proclaim the divine message to “all nations” (Mt 28:18).



The first missionary, the only begotten Son sent on earth by the Father to redeem the world, sends the apostles out to continue his mission (cf. Jn 20:21). The missionary typology of the “Word made flesh” also includes the self-emptying of the one who exists in the form of God and who assumed

the form of a servant, becoming like men (cf. Phil 2:6-7). The Pauline concept of “kenosis” allows us to see in the Incarnation the first example of the self-emptying of those who accept Christ’s mandate and leave everything to bring the Good News “to the very ends of the earth.”

4. In affirming the transcendent origin of the missionary dynamism of his Incarnation, Jesus also reveals in it his purpose, which consists in opening to all the way back to God. Jesus marked this path out first. He declared: "I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am



leaving the world and going back to the Father" (Jn 16:28). He explained that the aim of this "going" was to prepare a place "in his Father's house" for the disciples, to whom he said: "I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be" (Jn 14:3). Jesus' return to the Father was carried out through a sacrifice in which he showed his love for men "to the end" (Jn 13:1).

He wants men to participate in his ascent to the Father. To bring about this participation, he sends his apostles, and together with them, the whole Church, which extends his preaching and activities in all places and in all ages.

5. We have emphasized the fact that Christ's missionary activity culminated in the offering of his sacrifice. According to the Father's plan, Jesus spent only a short period of his earthly life preaching, which was limited to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24). At the start, he also limited the ministry of the Twelve to this (cf. Mt 10:6). However, with the sacrifice of the cross he totally fulfilled the missionary purpose of his coming on earth: the salvation not only of the people of Israel or the Samaritans, but also the "Greeks" (cf. Jn

12:20-24), indeed, all humanity (Jn 12:32).

This fact sheds light on the Church's missionary activity, which must be marked by a sacrificial note foretold by Jesus: "No disciple is above his teacher, no slave above his master" (Mt 10:24). "You will be hated by all because of my name" (Mt 10:22).

We must follow the divine Master on the way of the cross. This is the way of the Church and the way of missionaries, as the Council recalls: "The Church, prompted by the Holy Spirit, must walk in the same path on which Christ walked: a path of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death, from which death he came forth a victor by his resurrection" (AG 5).

6. On this way of the Church and her missionaries, Christ is not only the initiator and the perfect example. He is also the one who supplies the necessary energy to proceed, communicating the Holy Spirit to his Church in every age. As we read again in the Council, to achieve universal salvation, "Christ sent from the Father his Holy Spirit, who was to carry on inwardly his saving work and prompt the Church to spread out" (AG 4). Let us return once again to the trinitarian source of the Church's missionary dynamism, which the Holy Spirit kindled at Pentecost. He continuously nourishes it in hearts, as the Love of the Father and the Son-- ignis, caritas --which imparts to the Church the fire of eternal Charity.

7. The Holy Spirit illumines and inflames the whole person with divine love, working effectively in minds and hearts. He intervenes deeply in the Church's missionary activity, which he himself at times "visibly anticipates...just as he unceasingly accompanies and directs it in different ways" (AG 4). Thus the Church, moved "by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit,"

fulfills her mission, opening up for all men "a firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ" (AG 5)." ♦



# Making sense of *Traditionis Custodes*

By James Martin, SJ



For many Catholics, the Holy Father's *motu proprio Traditionis Custodes*, restricting the celebration of the Latin Mass, was a difficult document to read, as well as a surprise, even a shock.

While I have never celebrated a Latin Mass as a priest (I'm using a shorthand for several variations of the Mass in Latin), I have as a Jesuit attended several, both before and after the publication of Pope Benedict's own *motu proprio*, "*Summorum Pontificum*," in 2007.

I found those Masses rich and beautiful, particularly as they invited me into the mystery and beauty of the liturgy of the Eucharist. They also helped me to feel strikingly connected to the past, knowing that I was hearing words that had been spoken by priests (and saints) and heard by the faithful (again, including the saints) for centuries.

Still, I feel more comfortable with Mass in the vernacular, which is what I celebrate every day, both in my Jesuit community and in local parishes. And I have

enjoyed Mass in the vernacular in many languages—in English of course; but also in Spanish on both the Lower East Side of Manhattan and in Loyola, Spain; in Kiswahili, Luganda and Kinyarwanda during my time in East Africa; in French during several pilgrimages to Lourdes; in Italian while visiting Rome, in Vietnamese and Tagalog at the Religious Education Congress in Los Angeles; and in Arabic and Hebrew in various churches and shrines in the Holy Land.

So I find Mass most powerful when it is celebrated in the vernacular. In general, celebrating and participating in the Mass in English helps me feel closer to God, since this is the language in which I speak to God in my private prayer. But, as I've written before, if something brings someone closer to God (and I'm speaking of the many Catholics who treasure the Mass in Latin) it should be revered.

So I reverence the great devotion that many Catholics have for the Latin Mass.

At the same time, we must take seriously Pope Francis's recent consultation with bishops



from around the world, in which he inquired about the actual, on-the-ground results of *Summorum Pontificum*.



Some have rejoiced in greater freedom for the celebration of the Latin Mass since Benedict XVI's document was promulgated, but it has also been, sadly, a source of growing and occasionally heated division among some Catholics. At least in the United States, some Catholics now speak of "Traditional Latin Mass parishes," as if in opposition to "Vatican II parishes." That does not

social media, as well as after lectures and talks, but occasionally these divisions have spilled into public view after having been reported by the Catholic media.

Of course, all Catholics are entitled to their liturgical preferences, regarding, say, church architecture, the hymns selected for the Mass, the priest's presiding style and so forth. But again, whatever one thinks of the Latin Mass, none of this bodes well for church unity.

Since 2007, many people have also told me that they cannot wait for the "real Mass" (that is, the Latin Mass) to supersede the "Vatican II Mass" (Mass in the vernacular), which they regard as banal, superficial or irreverent. And many people have critiqued me (both online and in person) for failing to celebrate the Mass in Latin, as if this somehow made me

bode well for unity.

In some parishes, priests have introduced Latin Masses into the regular rotation of Sunday Masses, either out of their own sincere devotion to the Latin Mass or in response to the equally sincere desires of some parishioners, and have, unintentionally and sometimes dramatically, split their parishes. (Often a Latin Mass will replace a Mass in English on Sundays.) At times this has meant altering the physical layout of the sanctuary, further dividing their parishioners.

In the past few years, I have received plaintive messages from Catholics who say that they feel left out of their own parishes as a result of these changes. Most



comments come through private messages on

a less devout priest.

For the record, I was two years old when *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Second Vatican Council's document on the liturgy, was published. So I grew up in an era where the Mass was always in the vernacular.

But far more important than these anecdotes and observations, which are, after all, from one priest in one country with his own liturgical preferences, is the response from bishops reporting from dioceses around the globe. This is an example

of Pope Francis listening to the Holy Spirit at work in the world, and another instance of his desire for "synodality."

As an aside, it is important to

remember, as Austen Ivereigh reminded us, that

Pope Benedict XVI told reporters in 2007 that *Summorum Pontificum* would be reviewed if problems arose. Benedict's document, motivated by a desire for unity, was responding to a need in the church — that is, it was a way of making those who appreciated the Latin Mass feel more at home, and thus fostering greater unity. As Michael Sean Winters reported, Benedict never intended to start a movement — and certainly not an ideology. That was not the way of Benedict, for whom church unity was an essential and longstanding goal.

After consulting with the bishops, however, Francis has concluded that Benedict's document, aimed at furthering unity, had unintentionally caused division. The sacrament of unity was, in some places, starting to lead to serious disunity.

"The responses reveal a situation that

preoccupies and saddens me, and persuades me of the need to intervene," Francis wrote in a letter to bishops accompanying his *motu proprio*. "Regrettably, the pastoral objective of my Predecessors, who had intended 'to do everything possible to ensure that all those who truly possessed the desire for unity would find it possible to remain in this unity or to rediscover it anew,'" said Francis, quoting Benedict, "has often been seriously disregarded."

Overarching all this is the fact that the Second Vatican Council's clear intent was that the Mass be celebrated in the vernacular and that this be the primary way that people experience the Mass. This was one of the main ways that the Council hoped to promote what *Sacrosanctum Concilium* called the "full, active" participation in the sacrament. ♦

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*Continued from Page 6: Walking together*

three opportunities. First, it must move not occasionally but structurally towards a synodal Church, where all can feel at home and participate.

Second, the Synod offers us the opportunity to become a listening Church, to break out of our routine in order to stop and listen, firstly to the Spirit in adoration and prayer, and then to our brothers and sisters, their hopes, the crises of faith around the world, the need for renewed pastoral life.

Keeping in mind that God's style is one of closeness, compassion and tenderness, the Pope said the Synod is also an occasion for the People of God not to be aloof but to become a Church of closeness by her very presence, bandaging wounds and healing

broken hearts with the balm of God.

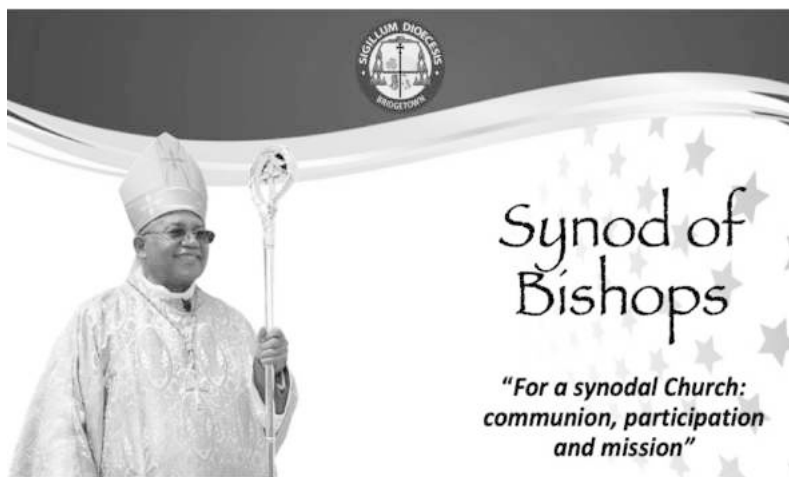
**Not another Church but a different Church**

For this, the Holy Father said, we need the ever new breath of God, the Spirit, who sets us free from every form of self-absorption, revives what is

*moribund, loosens shackles, and spreads joy. "There is no need to create another Church, but to create a different Church," the Pope said citing Dominican priest Father Yves Marie-Joseph Congar.*

"For a 'different Church', the Pope urged all to invoke the Holy Spirit with greater fervour and frequency and humbly listen to Him.

----- Vatican News ♦



# Testifying living Christ joyfully

*By Devin Watkins*



In a message for Diocesan World Youth Day 2021, released on Sept 27, the pope invited the youth to join a “spiritual pilgrimage leading to the celebration of the 2023 World Youth Day” in Lisbon, Portugal.

Reflecting on the dramatic conversion of St Paul the Apostle, the pope made a series of appeals to young people ahead of the annual celebration on Nov 21.

He said: “In Jesus’ name, I ask you: Arise! Testify that you too were blind and encountered the light. You too have seen God’s goodness and beauty in yourself, in others, and in the communion of the Church, where all loneliness is overcome.”

“Arise! Testify to the love and respect it is possible to instill in human relationships, in the lives of our families, in the dialogue between parents and children, between the young and the elderly.”

“Arise! Uphold social justice, truth, and integrity, human rights. Protect the persecuted, the poor and the vulnerable, those who have no voice in society, immigrants.”

He continued: “Arise! Testify to the new way of looking at things that enables you to view creation with eyes brimming with wonder, that makes you see the Earth as our common home, and gives you the courage to promote an integral ecology.”

“Arise! Testify that lives of failure can be rebuilt, that persons spiritually dead can rise anew, that those in bondage can once more be free, that hearts overwhelmed by sorrow can rediscover hope.”

“Arise! Testify joyfully that Christ is alive! Spread his message of love and salvation among your contemporaries, at school and in the university, at work, in the digital world, everywhere.”

As well as international World Youth Day (WYD) gatherings typically held every three years, the Catholic Church also sponsors local youth day events for which the pope sends a message each year.

This year, WYD will be celebrated at the diocesan level on the Solemnity of Christ the King with the theme “Arise! I make you a witness of what you have seen,” inspired by Jesus’ words to St Paul recorded in Acts 26:16.

In his message dated Sept 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the pope praised young people for their resilience throughout the coronavirus





# Titles of St Joseph

*(There are many titles given to St. Joseph. Here below, I have tried to put together and list some of them for our reflection. After Mother Mary, Joseph has been attributed with a variety of titles, culled out from different sources – Mahesh Lobo.)*



life of poverty and misery, He selected a tutor for Him, a man to take His own place, and that man was Joseph. What a dignity! Educator of the Son of God!

## **St Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church**

His house was the first domestic Church. During the years that God's Church may be said to have consisted of only three members, Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Joseph was

## **St Joseph**

It is because he is a Saint we have the right to invoke him --- viz: one dear to God; one who has lived his life well and won the prize of existence, and hence now in possession of God; and one about whose possession of God we have certainty, so that we can legitimately hope for his help

## **St Joseph, Husband of Mary**

Joseph was married to the Blessed Mother. If anything went wrong, it actually *was* his fault. Even when he wanted to put her away quietly as she was found to be with child, he obeyed the message given by the Angel of the Lord and accepted her as his wife.

## **St Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus**

When you think about the fact that his mission on earth was to be a stand-in for God the Father and raise God Himself into an adult man, it's mind-blowing. When a father sends his son to be educated abroad, he appoints a tutor to take his place, to be in loco parentis; so when the Eternal Father sent His son into creation to be trained in a

evidently its Protector; he guarded the seed whence the world-wide (Catholic) Church was to spring up later on. In Mary's womb was formed the first beginning not only of the physical Body of Jesus but also of His Mystical Body, of which we are the members. And Joseph, since his death, has by his prayers and intercession been protecting this Mystical Body, has acted as heavenly Patron and Protector of the Church of Christ.

## **St Joseph, illustrious Son of David**

During long ages the prophecy was handed down that the Messiah was to spring from the seed of David, the great hero-king to whom the Jews looked back with such pride. Joseph was of the royal blood of David, and, as legal father of Jesus, handed on to Him as Foster Son, all the rights he himself inherited.

## **St Joseph, Most Pure and Chaste**

That's where the name "Josephite" marriage

*...Continued on Page 19*

## SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

# St Francis Anthony Fasani

August 1681 – November 1742

Feast Day: 29 November

Francis Fasani was born in Lucera (Southeast Italy) to Giuseppe Fasani and Isabella Della Monaca, very poor peasants; but he was a bright lad, and received good education from the Conventual Franciscans in his native town. At 14, he entered the Friars Minor Conventual friary at Lucera and was ordained 10 years later in 1705. He was then sent to the Sagro Convento, adjoining the basilica in Assisi where St Francis is buried, for the purpose of continuing his studies. Two years later he received the doctorate in theology, and he was then appointed lector of philosophy in the college conducted by the Conventuals in his home town.

Saint Francis Anthony Fasani was promoted successively to regent of studies, guardian, and provincial, which latter office he held from 1721 to 1723. After that he served as master of novices, and then as pastor of the church of St Francis in Lucera. A bishopric was offered to him, but he declined it.

The spiritual life of Fr. Fasani was characterized by those virtues that made him like his Seraphic Father St Francis of Assisi. In fact, it was said in Lucera: "Whoever wants to see how St Francis of Assisi looked while he was alive should come to see Padre Maestro." In imitation of St Francis of Assisi he built his religious life on the basis of a generous participation in the mysteries of Christ through the most faithful practice of the evangelical counsels, which he considered to be a radical expression of perfect charity. In his



constant prayers, inflamed with seraphic love, he called out to God, saying to Him: "O Highest Love, Immense Love, Eternal Love, Infinite Love."

His fervent devotion to the Immaculate Mother of the Lord was nourished by his intense dedication to knowing ever better "who Mary is" and making her known to others, while at the same time knowing and making known the maternal role entrusted to her in the history of salvation with faith and love.

The priestly life of Father Anthony Fasani is a splendid testimony to fidelity and dedication to the mission

given to all priests in the Church. It is their duty --- as Vatican Council II so vigorously confirms --- to promote "the glory of God the Father in Christ by their ministry and their life" (PO 2). In exercising this evangelical mission Fr Fasani gave himself devotedly from the very moment of his priestly ordination to such an extent that a witness could assert: "He allowed himself no rest in the salvation of souls." His pastoral ministry shows that he was involved zealously in many fields and forms of the apostolate according to the needs of the particular Churches in which he ministered.

The ministry of preaching the word of God assumed a special role in his apostolic life. He preached popular missions, retreats, Lenten devotions and novenas almost constantly at Lucera and wherever he was called. The duty which falls to all priests "to invite all people to conversion and holiness" (PO, 4) was carried out by Fr Fasani through a type of preaching based on the scriptures

## SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

# St Maria Crocifissa Di Rosa

November 1813 - December 1855

Feast Day: 15 December

One of nine children born to the industrialist Clement di Rosa and Countess Camilla Albani was born in 1813. Her father owned a large spinning mill, and Mary grew up in a happy and pious family. She was educated by Visitandine nuns. Mary's mother died when the girl was 17, and she left school to help manage her father's estate. Her heart set on a religious life, she turned down many suitors. She worked with young girls in her community, those who worked in her father's mills, and the sick in local hospital, including endless work during the cholera epidemic of 1836. Founded a home dedicated to the spiritual needs of young girls, and a school for deaf children. In 1840 she became the superior of the *Handmaids of Charity*, nuns who cared for the sick, and she took the name Maria Crocifissa. The community received their bishop's approval in 1843, papal approval in 1850, and Mary led them until her death.

She had tackled enormous projects from the time she was seventeen, arranging retreats and special missions for her parish and setting up a women's guild. Because of all she accomplished, when she was only twenty-four she was asked to be supervisor of a workhouse for poor girls. After two years, she became concerned because there was no place for the girls to go at the end of the day. Night held special dangers for these girls and Paula wanted to give them a safe place to stay. The trustees refused to provide that place. For Paula the choice was easy -- she once said that she could never go to bed with a clear conscience if she had missed the chance to do some good. So she quit the



workhouse to set up a boardinghouse for poor girls while helping her brother with a school for the deaf.

This is one of its kind of incidents in the life of Maria di Rosa. The pounding on the barricaded door of the military hospital sent every heart thudding in terror. In the middle of the war in Brescia (Italy) in 1848, the wounded, sick, and those who cared for them knew what that pounding meant. The shouts from beyond the door came from soldiers, not obeying any

command but their inner desire to destroy and plunder. Who could do anything to stop them? The only people there were some Sisters, the Handmaids of Charity, who devoted themselves to helping the sick. The doctors had not even wanted them there. The doctors wanted medical people who were secular and military, not nuns. And in the face of this new danger they were even more useless! Worse than useless -- because that Paula (as she was known) di Rosa was actually moving to open the door!

When the door swung wide, the soldiers saw their way blocked with a great crucifix held by Paula di Rosa and two candles held by two of the six sisters who stood by her. Suddenly their frenzy to destroy disappeared, and full of shame before this display of courage and faith, they slunk back into the shadows.

Throughout her life, Paula di Rosa was never afraid to open the door on a new opportunity to serve God, especially when she was unsure of what lay beyond. People who didn't know her well must have thought she was too frail and delicate for



these ventures, but she came armed not only with her faith but boundless energy, intelligence, and hunger to serve. Her strong spirituality was grounded in the imitation of Christ's suffering on the Cross. This was the basis of her teaching and contemplation. In her love of the crucified Christ, she translated her dedication to him towards the suffering members of His Mystical Body. Maria's own spirituality and her order are sprung from her deep understanding that all Christian life is modelled off of Christ's cross. And love for Christ Crucified and the desire to ease his sufferings led Maria and her companions to care for the poor and suffering in hospitals, and the wounded on the battlefields of Northern Italy.

Maria Crocifissa's guiding motto for her



order was: "Charity without limits for the sick who represent Jesus Christ." The Handmaids of Charity's charism to this day echoes this founding sentiment. They seek to bring hope to those who are sick or dying, through their faith in Christ, which manifests itself in their works of charity. All they do is for, with, and in Christ.

Maria Crocifissa died in Brescia on December 15, 1855, at the age of forty-two. She was canonized just under one hundred years later by Pope Pius XII in 1954. Her order of sisters, the Handmaidens of Charity, continues to serve the

poor and suffering in Italy and throughout the world.

**Source:** [www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints); [www.catholicsaints.info](http://www.catholicsaints.info); [www.faith.nd.edu](http://www.faith.nd.edu) ♦

*Continued from Page 16: St Francis Anthony Fasani*

that was well prepared, persuasive, and had the particular purpose, as one witness recalled, "of rooting out vices and sins and planting in their place goodness and the exercise of virtue." The Eucharist, for him, was the pinnacle of life. The Eucharist, he said, is "the source and summit of evangelization," and how the laity is "fully incorporated into the Body of Christ."

The poor, the sick, and the imprisoned held a privileged place in his pastoral activities. Motivated by his ideal of gospel charity ("We must be charitable."), he loved to pray with the poor and for them. Every day he personally distributed to the poor the alms of his religious community and very often he gave them as well gifts and special goods gathered from benefactors. Oftentimes his prayers obtained extraordinary interventions of divine Providence for the poor. He visited and comforted the sick, exhorting them to seek reasons for hope and



resignation in the goodness of God. The spiritual care of the imprisoned, an apostolate given him by the bishop of Lucera, permitted him to visit them daily and to exhort them to trust in the merciful love of God. He was given the responsibility of assisting those condemned to death in their last moments.

After 35 years in the priesthood and a life of penance, union with God, and intense labor the salvation of souls, God called Father Francis Anthony to Himself on November 29, 1742. On that day the people of Lucera came hurrying to the church of St Francis, exclaiming as did the children at the death of St Anthony of Padua, "The saint is dead! The saint is dead!" And for 200 years since then, they have continued to kneel and pray at his tomb. Pope Pius XII beatified him on April 15, 1951 and St John Paul II canonized him on 21 March 1985.

**Source:** [www.roman-catholic-saints.com](http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com); [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va); [www.thecompassnews.org](http://www.thecompassnews.org) ♦

*Continued from Page 15: Titles of St Joseph*

comes from, after all, and it takes serious holiness. His chastity flowed from an incredible dedication to his role in the life of Jesus and Mary. Surely, it wasn't easy.



humbly to be the foster father of the unborn King.

### **St Joseph, Patron of Saint of Fathers**

Model for all earthly fathers, a man who stood by his child through all the difficult

### **St Joseph, Patron of the Unborn Child**

It was Joseph who was given the great task from God to care for the expectant mother and accepted

moments, the pillar of the house, the one who worried about providing enough food to put on the humble dinner table of the Holy Family. ♦

◆  
*Continued from Page 14: Testifying living Christ joyfully*



pandemic, which has claimed more than 4.7 million lives worldwide.

“All over the world, we saw great numbers of individuals, including many young people, helping to save lives, sowing seeds of hope, upholding freedom and justice, and acting as peacemakers and bridge builders,” he wrote.

“Whenever a young person falls, in some sense all humanity falls. Yet it is also true that when a young person rises, it is as if the whole world rises as well. Young people, what great potential you have in your hands! What great strength you have in your hearts!”

“Today too, God is saying to each one of you: ‘Arise!’ I fervently hope that this message may

help us prepare for new times and a new page in the history of humanity. Yet we cannot begin anew without you, dear young people. If our world is to arise, it needs your strength, your enthusiasm, your passion.”

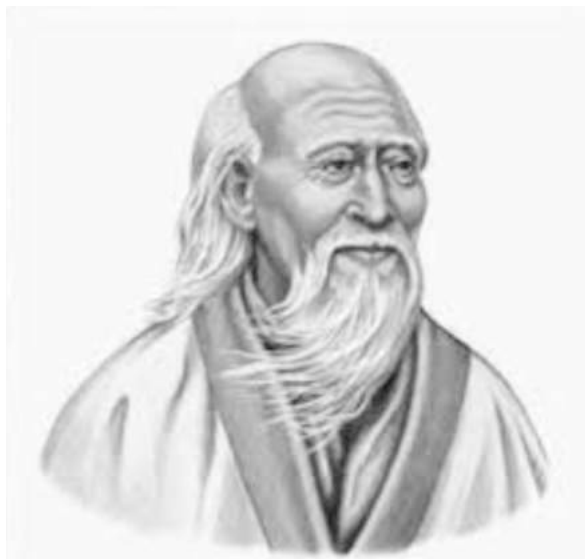
Pope Francis said that Paul’s life-changing encounter with Jesus underlined the need for humility.

“St. Thérèse of Lisieux, like so many other saints, loved to say that humility is truth,” the pope recalled.

----- Vatican News ♦

INTERNATIONAL  
**YOUTH**  
DAY





“Once upon a time in a faraway land, there lived a Chinese wise man and his disciple. One day in their travels, they saw a hut in the distance. As they approached they realized that it was occupied in spite of its extremely poor appearance. In that desolate place where there were no crops and no trees, a man lived with his wife, three young children and a thin, tired cow. Since they were hungry and thirsty, the wise man and his disciple stopped for a few hours and were well received.

At one point, the wise man asked: “This is a very poor place, far away from anything. How do you survive?”

“You see that cow? That’s what keeps us going,” said the head of the family. “She gives us milk, some of it we drink and some we make into cheese. When there is extra, we go into the city and exchange the milk and cheese for other types of food. That’s how we survive.” The wise man thanked them for their hospitality and left.

When he reached the first bend in the road, he said to his disciple: “Go back, get the cow, take her to the cliff in front of us, and push her off.” The disciple could not believe what he was hearing. “I cannot do

that, master! How can you be so ungrateful? The cow is all they have. If I throw it off the cliff, they’ll have no way to survive. Without the cow, they’ll all die!” The wise man took a deep breath and repeated the order: “Go ahead. Push the cow off the cliff.”

Though outraged at what he was being asked to do, the student was resigned to obey his master. He returned to the hut and quietly led the animal to the edge of the cliff and pushed. The cow fell down the cliff and died.

As the years passed by, remorse for what he had done never left the disciple. One spring day, the guilt became too much to bear and he left the wise man and returned to that little shack. He wanted to find out what had happened to that family, to help them out, apologize, or somehow make amends.

Upon rounding a turn in the road, he could not believe what his eyes were showing him. In place of the poor shack there was a beautiful house with trees all around, a swimming pool, several cars in the garage, a satellite dish, and on and on. Three good-looking teenagers and their parents were celebrating their first million dollars. The heart of the disciple froze. What could have happened to





the family? Without a doubt, they must have been starving to death and forced to sell their land and leave. At that moment, the student thought they must all be begging on the street corners of some city. He approached the house and asked a man that was passing by about the whereabouts of the family that had lived there several years before.

“You’re looking at it,” said the man, pointing to the people gathered around the barbecue. Unable to believe what he was hearing, the disciple walked through the gate and took a few steps closer to the pool where he recognized the man from several years before, only now he was strong and confident, the woman was happy, and the children were now nice-looking teenagers.

He was dumbfounded, and went over to the man and asked: “What happened? I was here with my teacher a few years ago, and this was a miserable place. There was nothing. What did you do to improve your lives in such a short time?” The man looked at the disciple, and replied with a smile: “We had a cow that kept us alive. She was all

we had. But one day she fell down the cliff and died. To survive, we had to start doing other things, develop skills we didn’t even know we had. And

so, because we were forced to come up with new ways of doing things, we are now much better off than before.”

### **Moral of the story:**

Sometimes our dependency on something small and limited is the biggest obstacle to our growth. Perhaps the best thing

that could happen to you is to push your “cow” down the cliff. Once you free yourself of the thought “it’s little but it’s certain,” or of that idea “I am not doing great but there are people who are much worse than me” — then your life will really change.

Is there a ‘cow’ in your life that is keeping you miserable? Close year 2021 by throwing it off the cliff! And welcome new year 2016 with challenging arms. ♦



# News Round-Up

## Plenary indulgence for November

The Vatican has decided once again to grant a plenary indulgence to Catholics who visit a cemetery to pray for the dead on any day in the month of November.

In a typical year, the Church only grants this plenary indulgence for the souls in Purgatory to those who pray in a cemetery on Nov 1-8, the week of the Solemnity of All Souls' Day.

Last year the Apostolic Penitentiary had issued a decree that extended the availability of certain plenary indulgences amid concerns about avoiding large gatherings of people in churches or cemeteries due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Vatican announced on Oct. 28 that this same decree would also apply in November 2021.

This includes the particular Nov 2 plenary indulgence one can receive for one's own soul by visiting a church or an oratory and reciting an Our Father and the Creed, which can now also be done on any day in November.

A plenary indulgence remits all temporal punishment due to sin. It must always be accompanied by a full detachment from sin.

A Catholic who wishes to obtain a plenary indulgence must also fulfill the ordinary conditions of an indulgence, which are sacramental confession, reception of the Eucharist, and prayer for the pope's intentions.

Sacramental confession and reception of the Eucharist can occur up to about 20 days before or after the indulgenced act.

With the decree for pandemic conditions, those who cannot leave home, such as the sick and the elderly, can still obtain an indulgence by reciting prayers for the deceased before an image of Jesus or the Virgin Mary.

They must also spiritually unite themselves to other Catholics, be completely detached from sin, and have the intention of fulfilling the ordinary conditions as soon as possible.

The Vatican's decree offered examples of prayers that homebound Catholics can pray for the dead, including lauds or vespers of the Office for the Dead, the rosary, the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy, other prayers for deceased among their family or friends, or performing a work of mercy by offering their pain and discomfort to God.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, believers have honored and prayed for the dead from the earliest days of Christianity.

"From the beginning, the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God," the catechism states in paragraph 1032.

"The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead."

"Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them," it says. ♦

## Pope decries abortion and Euthanasia

Pope Francis decried abortion and euthanasia in a speech to members of the Pontifical Academy for

Life, on Sept 27, in which he said that today's "throwaway culture" leads to the killing of children and discarding of the elderly.

"There is the discarding of children that we do not want to welcome with the law of abortion that sends them to the dispatcher and kills them directly. And today this has become a 'normal' method, a practice that is very ugly. It is really murder," Pope Francis said.

The pope said that to understand what abortion is, it helps to pose two questions.

"Is it right to eliminate, to take a human life to solve a problem? Is it right to hire a hitman to solve a problem? That's what abortion is," the pope commented.

Pope Francis said that the elderly today were also viewed as "waste material" and "of no use" in today's throwaway culture.

"But they are wisdom. They are the roots of wisdom of our civilization, and this civilization discards them," he said.

"Yes, in many parts there is also the law of 'hidden euthanasia,' as I call it. It is the one that makes people say: 'Medications are expensive, only half of them are needed,' and this means shortening the life of the elderly."

The pope added that both abortion and euthanasia "deny hope" by negating "the hope of children who bring us the life that keeps us going and the hope that is in the roots that the elderly give us."

Pope Francis underlined that this was not a path for Catholic universities or hospitals to follow.

"This is a road on which we cannot go: the road of discarding," he said. ♦

### **Karnataka govt's move to survey Christian churches opposed**

Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore has called on the state government to withdraw its orders to survey Christian missionaries, their places of worship, and other Christian institutions. The survey comes amid a proposal to pass "anti-conversion" laws, which Christians and others say are abused by extremists.

"The entire Christian community in Karnataka opposes the proposal in one voice and questions the need for such an exercise when sufficient laws and court directives are in place to monitor any aberration of the existing laws," the archbishop said Oct 25.

The government of Karnataka is deliberating whether to pass an anti-conversion law similar to that of eight other Indian states. Such an anti-conversion law would be "a tool for fringe elements to take law into their own hands" and foment civil unrest, he warned.

He challenged critics of religious conversion to prove their claims of coercion or other misconduct.

There are about 400,000 Catholics in the Bangalore archdiocese. There are about 1.1 million Christians in all of Karnataka, according to the 2011 census. Yet Christians are less than 2% of the state's total population of some 61 million. Hindus make up 84% of the state's people, while about 13% are Muslim.

If there really were many conversions, the archbishop said, Christian numbers would have increased beyond 1.87% of the population recorded in the last census. Even if there are abuses, he said, "random and sporadic incidents should not be referred to (put) the entire Christian community in bad light."

The state government decided to conduct the survey Oct. 13 after a Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker claimed that conversions were widespread. He said that his mother had converted to



Christianity, according to UCA News. The lawmaker has accused ♦

### **Christian-Muslim dispute goes to India's top court**

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a dispute between Christians and Muslims over minority scholarships for students after accepting an appeal filed by Kerala's state government.

The Supreme Court bench of Justice L Nageswara Rao and Justice BR Gavai on Oct. 29 ordered to serve notices on all the parties listed in the appeal as respondents.

The Kerala government moved the top court challenging an order by Kerala High Court to quash the 80:20 ratio for distributing scholarships meant for minority communities.

The High Court in its May 28 order directed the state government to provide scholarships among minority communities, mostly Muslims and Christians, in proportion to their population.

The state order allocated 80 percent of scholarship funds to Muslims, while only 20 percent was allocated to Christians and other minorities such as Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

The government claimed it had fixed the ratio based on the backwardness of the minorities rather than the population, but Christians said the move was biased and against natural justice.

The High Court in its order made it clear that the allocation favored Muslims in the distribution of merit-cum-means scholarships meant for religious minority communities and set aside a 2015 government order to this effect.

Of the 33 million people in Kerala, 18 percent are Christians, while Muslims form 27 percent and Hindus 54 percent. In terms of numbers, Christians (6 million) and Muslims (9.7 million) together form 15.7 million or 99.7 percent of religious minorities in the state.

Church leaders quoted the state census to argue that the order violated proportional distribution of funding as Christians form 39 percent of the minority population in the state while Muslims constitute 60 percent.

Soon after the high court order, the Muslim community opposed it and urged the government to appeal as they felt they had been discriminated.

But Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) agreed with the order, saying "the court had recognized the stand of the community" and urged the government to implement the order.

The government initially agreed to the Christians' demand and said it would not appeal. It tried to work out a win-win formula by increasing scholarships whereby Muslims continued to get the same benefits and Christians' grievances were partially addressed.

Meanwhile, some Muslim groups challenged the order and finally the government launched an appeal, much to the disappointment of the Kerala Christian community, especially the Eastern-rite Syro-Malabar Christians. ♦

### **Holy Father's Prayer Intentions**

#### **November 2021: People who suffer from depression**

We pray that people who suffer from depression or burn-out will find support and a light that opens them up to life.

#### **December 2021: Catechists**

Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

# For a synodal Church

## communion | participation | mission

from **Preparatory Document**

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission  
(07 September 2021)

*... The whole Church is called to deal with the weight of a culture imbued with clericalism that she inherits from her history, and with those forms of exercising authority on which the different types of abuse are grafted...*

*... "Church and Synod are synonymous"*

*... The consultation of the People of God does not imply the assumption within the Church of the dynamics of democracy based on the principle of majority...*

*... a synodal Church is a Church "going forth," a missionary Church "whose doors are open"...*

*... The proclamation of the Gospel is not addressed only to an enlightened or chosen few. Jesus' interlocutor is the "people" of ordinary life, the "everyone" of the human condition...*

*... The election of the apostles is not the privilege of an exclusive position of power and separation but the grace of an inclusive ministry of blessing and fellowship...*

*... to "journey together," we need to let ourselves be educated by the Spirit to a truly synodal mentality...*

*... The insidiousness that divides ... manifests itself indifferently in the forms of religious rigor, of moral injunction ... and of the seduction of a worldly political...*

*... no human being is unworthy in the eyes of God, and the difference established by election does not imply exclusive preference but service and witnessing of a universal breadth...*

*... We recall that the purpose of the Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but "to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands..."*



# St PETER'S PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE

## DEPARTMENT OF MISSIOLOGY

### BANGALORE

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#### Facilities Available

- ♦ One of the best libraries in Asia.
- ♦ Scholarship and Hostel Facilities.
- ♦ Language course in Latin, French, Italian and German.

#### Objectives

- ♦ To prepare efficient Secretaries for Commissions of CBCI, CCBI and Regional Episcopal Conferences such as Commission for Proclamation (CCBI), Commission for Interreligious Dialogue (CBCI), Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (CBCI), Commission for Small Christian Communities (CCBI), Commission for Ecology (CCBI)
- ♦ To form experts, researchers and formators.
- ♦ To prepare professors for Seminaries, Ecclesiastical Institutes and Formation Houses.
- ♦ To prepare efficient co-ordinators of the Pastoral Centres.
- ♦ To form effective pastors to ably head various commissions of the Pastoral Centres.

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- Introductory Course and Interdisciplinary Methodology (Three Credits)
- Biblical Orientations for Mission (Four Credits)
- Theologies of Mission in the History and Magisterium of Church (Eleven Credits)
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- Dialogue with the Religions (Eight Credits)
- Dialogue with the Cultures (Nine Credits)
- Dialogue with the Poor (Nine Credits)
- The Triple Dialogue in Praxis (Thirteen Credits)
- Church and Mission (Six Credits)
- Missionary Spirituality (Four Credits)
- Pastoral Dynamics of Mission (Four Credits)
- Seminars (Two Credits)
- Mission Exposure Programmes (Eight Credits)

#### Eligibility

- For Licentiate in Missiology  
Bachelor Degree in Theology or equivalent Christian U. G. Studies
- For Doctorate in Missiology  
Licentiate in Missiology or equivalent Christian P. G. Studies

#### Professors

Dr Antony Lawrence  
Dr Stany C. Fernandes  
Dr Simon Pinto  
Dr P V Antony  
Dr Sr Stancy, SMI  
Dr Yann Vagneux, MEP  
Dr Jerry Rosario, SJ

Prof. Dr Lucien Legrand, MEP  
Prof. Dr Michael Amaladoss, SJ  
Prof. Dr Felix Wilfred  
Prof. Dr Jacob Parappally, MSFS  
Prof. Dr Maria Arul Raja, SJ  
Prof. Dr S. M. Michael, SVD  
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