

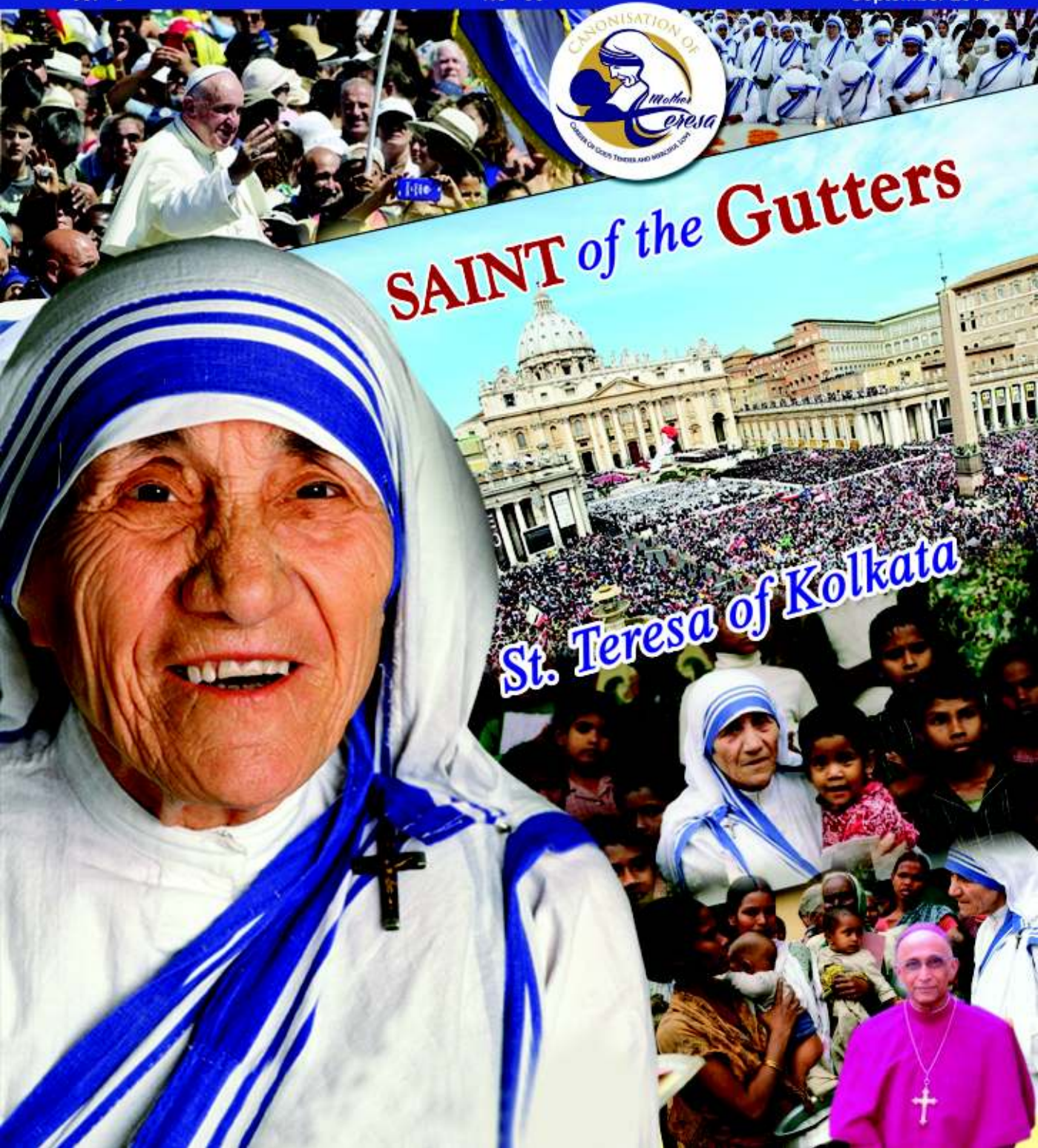
# Vishal Jagriti

A National Catholic Laity Magazine

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SAINT of the Gutters

St. Teresa of Kolkata



**Wishing All Success to**  
**Little Flower Mission Hospital, Vilakkudi, Punalur**  
**on its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



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# Editorial...

## "Saint of the Gutters" Elevated



"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy."

- St. Francis of Assisi

Another Francis, the current Pope, has recognised and elevated a humble nun who lived the prayer of St Francis with the title of Saint on September 4, 2016 at the Vatican. By popular vote Mother Teresa of Kolkata had been called and venerated as "Saint of the Gutters". But to declare her officially "Saint", the Catholic Church has certain processes which were expedited by two popes so that Mother Teresa was declared "Blessed" first and then "Saint" in one of the shortest time in church history. In a way it was only a formality to go through.

*Vishal Jagriti* is covering this event not only as news but with a number of background articles by people touched by her in their lives. Navin Chawla, a leading bureaucrat who ended up as Chief Election Commissioner of India has been a life-time admirer and associate of Mother Teresa and has written her biography. We have an article by him, reproduced from *The Hindu*. We have another personal account from Derek O'Brien, MP, the well-known quiz host, who accompanied Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of Bengal, to the Vatican to participate in the canonisation ceremony. Not many know that the famous Dr. Devi Shetty started his practice in Kolkata before establishing his medical complex, Narayan Netralaya/Hridalaya, in Bangaluru. *The Times of India* wrote about his tryst with Mother Teresa and we are reproducing this piece.

We have also included Mother Teresa's oration while receiving the Nobel Prize – a document full of earthy wisdom, compassion and call to action.

Archbishop Bernard Moras of Bangalore Diocese has had a brilliant and varied career and has now reached his platinum Jubilee which was celebrated recently on a subdued note. We have an article on him by one of his numerous admirers, Joe Lobo, and free-wheeling interview with him by Gabriel Vaz, Bengaluru-based veteran journalist. Both these were first published in *Dajjiworld Weekly* and we are grateful to its Editor, Hemacharya (Stephen Mascarenhas), for permission to reproduce.

Finally, we have a learned lecture delivered under the auspices of Catholic Association of South Kanara on August 19, 2016 in Mangaluru. It offers much to think about and VJ earnestly hopes that it provokes responses from its readers to be included in the coming issues. Dr. Valerian Rodrigues, a low-profile and self-effacing eminent academic has held prestigious posts and fellowships and is currently attached to Mangalore University working as National Fellow of Indian Council of Social Sciences and Research.

Until next issue then!

- Lancy D'Cunha, Editor

# Pope Declares Mother Teresa a Saint

Vatican City, Sep 4 (AFP): Mother Teresa, the nun whose work with the dying and destitute of Kolkata made her a global icon of Christian charity, was made a saint today.

Her elevation to Roman Catholicism's celestial pantheon came in a canonisation mass in St Peter's square in the Vatican that was presided over by Pope Francis in the presence of 100,000 pilgrims.

"For the honour of the Blessed Trinity... we declare and define Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (Kolkata) to be a Saint and we enroll her among the Saints, decreeing that she is to be venerated as such by the whole Church," the pontiff said in Latin.

## In Kolkata at Saint's Convent

The ceremony came a day before the 19th anniversary of Teresa's death in Kolkata, the Indian city where she spent nearly four decades tending to the poorest of the poor.

With the 16th century basilica of St Peter's and an azure sky providing the backdrop, the faithful basked in the late summer sun as Francis presided over a ritual mass that has barely changed for centuries.

Such was the demand from pilgrims, the Vatican could easily have issued double the number of tickets but for space and security restrictions.

Helicopters had earlier buzzed over the headquarters of the Roman Catholic church, testifying to the huge but relatively discreet security operation under way. Some 3,000 officers were on duty to ensure the day passed off peacefully.

Among the assembled crowd were some 1,500 poor people looked after by the Italian branches of Teresa's order, the Missionaries of Charity.

After the mass they were to be Francis's guests at the Vatican for a giant pizza lunch served by 250 sisters and 50 male members of the order.

Teresa spent all her adult life in India, first teaching, then tending to the dying poor.

It was in the latter role, at the head of her now worldwide order that Teresa became one of the most famous women on the planet.

Born to Kosovan Albanian parents in Skopje - then part of the Ottoman empire, now the capital of Macedonia - she won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize and was revered around the world as a beacon for the Christian values of self-sacrifice and charity.

But she was also regarded with scorn by secular critics who accused her of being more concerned with evangelism than with improving the lot of the poor.

Sceptics were absent from the Vatican today however as Francis prepared to pay homage to a woman he sees as the embodiment of his vision of a "poor church for the poor".

By historical standards, Teresa has been fast-tracked to sainthood, thanks largely to one of the few people to have achieved canonisation faster, John Paul II.

The Polish cleric was a personal friend of Teresa and as the pope at the time of her death, he was

responsible for her being beatified in 2003.

Achieving sainthood requires the Vatican to approve accounts of two miracles occurring as a result of prayers for Teresa's intercession.

The first one, ratified in 2002, was of an Indian woman, Monica Besra, who says she recovered from ovarian cancer a year after Teresa's death.

In the second, approved last year, Brazilian Marcilio Haddad Andrino says his wife's prayers to Teresa led to brain tumours disappearing. Eight years later, Andrino and his wife Fernanda were in the congregation on Sunday.

Also in the crowd at St Peter's was Teresa Burley, an Italy-based American teacher of children with learning difficulties who says the new saint inspired her vocation. "I'm also named Teresa," she told AFP. "I remember growing up admiring the things she did for children and the poor. "We need to remember we are here to help each other. We need to be here for those who can't help themselves. It's the same for refugees arriving here: we have to be there to help them transition into their new lives."

Many Indians have made the trip to Rome, among them Kiran Kakumanu, 40, who was blessed by Teresa when he was a baby and grew up to become a priest.

Abraham, an Indian expatriate in London, said Teresa's life had set a unique example to the world.

"She practised Christianity. The majority of Christians only spend their time talking about it."



# A Journey to Sainthood

Mother Teresa's greatest miracle was her life itself. Armed only with an abundance of faith, she created a multinational organisation that served her special constituency of the 'poorest of the poor'

Mother Teresa entered into sainthood on September 4, 2016, after a relatively short period of 19 years since her passing away on September 5, 1997. Pope Francis recently recognised a second miracle attributed to her intercession which 'cured' a Brazilian patient, awaiting surgery, of an incurable infection in his brain. This ceremony performed at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City comes a mere 13 years after she was beatified on October 19, 2003. While the Church demanded one proven miracle for her to be beatified and another for sainthood to be conferred, the real miracle, I believe, was Mother Teresa's life itself. It was extraordinary that the strand of divinity remained uneclipsed from her childhood to her death. For me as well as for millions around the world, her goodness and compassion were so transparent that she was anointed a saint in her lifetime.

## The young woman from Skopje

Let me briefly encapsulate the many challenges that she faced when she began her work. She

was 18 when she was convinced that her life's vocation lay in her becoming a missionary in far-off India; Skopje, where she was born on August 26, 1910, was so far removed from Bengal that, barring a few Yugoslav Jesuits who fired her young imagination, no one in the small Catholic community would even have known where India lay. Yet the



early seeds of her faith and determination impelled her to leave her closely knit family. She found that the route to India lay in her joining the Loreto Order of teaching nuns, who were headquartered in faraway Calcutta. Here she taught for close to 20 years before her true calling propelled her to serve the poor in the streets and slums. The

Vatican, fantastically, gave her permission to step outside the Cloister, not as a lay worker but with her



**Navin Chawla**

religious vows intact, to set up her own order, the Missionaries of Charity. In 1948, Calcutta's pavements were swarming with teeming millions uprooted by the Partition, who had joined the

hapless sufferers of the Great Bengal Famine. Into this sea of tragedy, homelessness, disease and despair stepped a 38-year-old nun, dressed not in a recognisable nun's habit, but a sari similar to what the municipal sweepresses wore. She had no companion, no helper and no money to speak of. What she did have was a secret calling that her God wanted her to leave the security of the Loreto Convent and minister to Him in his distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor, the

abandoned infant, the leprosy sufferer shunned by society and the dying destitute.

At a time when the Raj had left no health care to speak of (1948), she confronted death at every turn. She did what was to become her hallmark. Finding a man dying in the street, she took him to a public hospital, which refused to admit him, precisely on the

grounds that since he was about to die they would not waste a hospital bed on a life they said they could not save! Only when she sat before the hospital on a dharna did they relent. The man died within a few hours. It was then that she began to search for a place where she could take those people whom hospitals refused, where she could nurse them — she had some medical training — and they could at least die being comforted and with some dignity. She begged various authorities, and finally an officer in Calcutta Municipality gave her a pilgrims' hall adjacent to the Kalighat temple, where she requested the police and municipal authorities to bring her all and any of those dying whom the hospitals refused. That policy continues.

I have been so many times to this hospice at Kalighat, that I did not need to ask Mother Teresa why she had not set up the hospital that Christopher Hitchens would later criticise her for not doing. I knew that a hospital would tie down dozens of her Sisters to a single establishment, and then who would care for those who fell by the wayside? The infant abandoned on a street, the sick and elderly turned out of their homes, the leprosy sufferers or AIDS patient that no one wanted to go near, let alone touch? How many of us step out of our cars to do anything for the desperately poor we see on the streets? We only have to look within us to know that those who are quick to

criticise her are unwilling to do anything to help with their own hands.

### **One determined step at a time**

Once described as a 'religious imperialist' and more commonly regarded as a saint, Mother Teresa was at many levels a very ordinary woman, yet someone who led one of the most extraordinary lives of her century. Armed only with an abundance of faith, she proceeded with one small but determined step at a time. By the time she passed away 19 years ago, she had created a multinational organisation that spanned 123 countries that served her special constituency of the 'poorest of the poor'. In the process, she was acknowledged as one of the world's principal conscience-keepers.

Although she herself remained staunchly Catholic, her brand of religion was not exclusive. Convinced that each person she ministered to was Christ in suffering, she reached out to people of all faiths. The very faith that sustained her infuriated her detractors, who saw her as a symbol of a right-wing conspiracy and, worse, the principal mouthpiece of the Vatican's well-known views against abortion and birth control. These were indeed her views and she was undeterred by such criticism. It was the one subject that she and I never did agree upon. I would cite the Malthusian formula while she

would answer that she could take care of every unwanted child.

In the course of researching my biography, I asked her why she took money from dodgy characters like Haiti's dictator Duvalier. Her answer was concise. Everyone, she said, had a right to give in charity. How was this different from thousands of people who each day fed the poor? "I have no right to judge them. God alone has that right." And again, "I accept no salary, no government grant, no church funding, nothing. I do not ask for money. But people have a right to give."

She had a clear vision of the street and a determination that she often tempered with a sense of humour.

In the end, she gently but unmistakably left her imprint at the heart of the Vatican itself. Finding in Pope John Paul II a kindred spirit, she cajoled him into opening a small soup kitchen around the corner from the Great Basilica of St. Peter's where the grand ceremony was held to declare her a Saint. At four every evening, Rome's homeless and hungry queue up to be fed by Mother Teresa's Sisters and a dozen volunteers. At a stroke this frail nun, indisputably the world's most decorated person, helped to demystify the Vatican's centuries-old aura of wealth and power.

*Navin Chawla is a biographer of Mother Teresa and a former Chief Election Commissioner of India.*

# The House Call that Changed Dr. Devi Shetty's Life

- Sunitha.Rao@timesgroup.com

He was operating on a toddler one morning in the 1980s, when cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty got a call asking him to attend to a patient at home. 'I don't do house calls,' he told the caller but the voice at the other end replied, 'This house call will change the course of your life'.

The next morning, he was examining Mother Teresa at a Missionaries of Charity home in Kolkata. "She refused to believe she needed an angioplasty. We had to convince her, use subtle ways to treat her. The entire world was watching us. The US wanted us to take her there as they had state-of-the-art equipment. But she was not keen and nobody could tell her what to do," recalls Dr Shetty, now chairman of Narayana Health.

Mother Teresa would follow Dr Shetty during his daily rounds to meet patients when she was in

hospital. "She saw babies awaiting surgery and told me, 'Dr Shetty, I know why you are here. When God created these children with a hole



in the heart, he wanted you to treat them.' She made me realize I am here to do God's work," he says. "Even now when I am operating, I tell myself that I am instrument in God's hands just as I hold instruments in mine... that was what I learnt from her," he says.

Dr Shetty often accompanied Mother Teresa to government

hospitals. "For her, it was not about medical care but human relationships. Her thoughts were about 'myself and god', not 'me and them'. That's how she was able to get volunteers to take care of people with HIV in the 1980s," recalls Dr Shetty.

"For me, as a doctor, surgeon, scientist, it's not easy to believe a person with flesh and blood is god. But she was not like us. She was different. She would create a serene environment around her through her simplicity. She spread the power of love," he says.

When Dr Shetty decided to move to Bangalore from Kolkata in 1989, getting a seat for his daughter in Sophia's school was not easy. "My wife suggested I get a letter from Mother," recalls Dr Shetty. "When I took the letter to the school, the principal was overwhelmed and the entire staff came running to see Mother's signature."

## Mother Teresa Stamp

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Vatican will anticipate the canonization of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata with a special postage stamp, which will be released Sept. 2, two days before Pope Francis officially declares her a saint.

The Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office announced the stamp's release Aug. 5 and distributed initial images of it.

The 95-cent stamp features a wrinkled but radiant Mother Teresa smiling in her blue-trimmed, white sari. Overlaid on the design by Patrizio Daniele is another image of her holding the hand of a small child.



simplicity and extraordinary humility, glorifying with her life the dignity of a most humble service," said the brochure announcing the stamp's release.

"She was a humble messenger of the Gospel and of Christ's love, known as 'a small pencil in the hands of the Lord,' doing her work quietly and always with great love," it said.

"She assisted the poor, the sick and the abandoned with tireless dedication, offering smiles and simple gestures, finding strength to persevere with her vocation through prayer and trust in God."

"Frail but equally determined in her vocation, Mother Teresa loved God and the church with great strength,

The philatelic office said it would print and sell a maximum of 150,000 sheets of 10 stamps each.

# Like Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa was deeply religious and yet beyond religion

- Derek O'Brien

Of the hundreds of Catholic orders across the world, only one has an office in the Vatican itself: the Missionaries of Charity, founded by Mother Teresa in Kolkata. Of the thousands of saints recognised by the Catholic church, a formal induction ceremony, as part of the canonisation process, has been reserved for only about 800. Tomorrow, Mother Teresa will join them. She will become the 10th St Teresa, St Teresa of Calcutta/Kolkata, and like the others distinguished by the city she is most identified with.

This background is important to understand why the canonisation of Mother Teresa is a special event even within the narrow space of the Catholic church's conferring of sainthood on its most revered. Some have been so honoured centuries after death. Joan of Arc was murdered in the early 15th century and canonised in the early 20th century.

Mother Teresa is being canonised merely 20 years after her passing. She is recognised as special, both within the Catholic church and outside. She is recognised as somebody who always introduced herself as an Indian, and yet rose above national boundaries to become a global icon.

This is reflected in how her canonisation is becoming an international event. From India, external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj is leading the official delegation. Two chief ministers are travelling separately, not for

political reasons but thanks to old associations with Mother.

Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of Bengal, first met Mother Teresa in the early 1990s in the context of disquieting religious violence in Kolkata. A few months ago - shortly after the assembly election results in Bengal - Sister Prema, worldwide head of the Missionaries of Charity, visited the chief minister and invited her to the ceremony. The offer was gratefully accepted. I was fortunate enough to be asked to accompany Mamata Banerjee.

The other chief minister going is Arvind Kejriwal. He too has old ties with Mother Teresa's work, having volunteered at the Missionaries of Charity during his student days in IIT Kharagpur. Indeed, some 150 pilgrims from Kolkata, about 15 inmates (I prefer the word "residents") of the homes for the poor that the Missionaries of Charity run in the city, and several others touched by Mother's life and by the 5,000 nuns and brothers of her order, across 130 countries, will either come to Rome or watch on television.

Not all of them are Catholic or even Christian. Like Gandhi, Mother Teresa was deeply religious - and yet beyond religion. When she picked up the sick and the indigent, literally off the street, cleaned and tended to them with her own hands and took them "home", she didn't stop to first ask for the religious identity of the person. "Yes, I convert," Mother once said, "I convert Hindus to become good Hindus, I convert Muslims to

become good Muslims, I convert Christians to become good Christians." While remaining true to the tenets of her faith, she was enlightened enough to appreciate the pluralism of our society.

My association with Mother Teresa began in the early 1970s, in class VIII. Father Bouche, a Belgian priest who taught us in school, encouraged us boys to make paper packets (thongas, as we call them in Kolkata) for use at Shishu Bhawan, the children's home the Missionaries of Charity ran.

Those of us not adept at making packets (like me) were asked to collect newspapers at home and from neighbours. The experience left an impression on us; we felt we were being useful. In college and as a working person, I volunteered at Shishu Bhawan and was lucky to meet Mother often. Those are fulfilling memories I still cherish.

We can all disagree with some aspect or the other of Mother's life. She would not be happy with my views on abortion or divorce. The criticism that the Missionaries of Charity did not consider psychological issues of the sick and the infirm or provide for palliative care - a specialised area now - for the terminally ill has been addressed only in recent years.

Nevertheless, when we assess her life, the good she did far, far outweighs the minor quibbles. Let's not get engrossed in those quibbles. Let's celebrate our Mother and her moment.

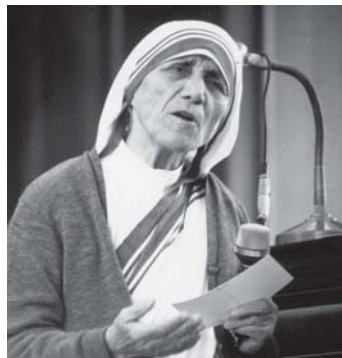


# Mother Teresa's Nobel Lecture

As we have gathered here together to thank God for the Nobel Peace Prize I think it will be beautiful that we pray the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which always surprises me very much - we pray this prayer every day after Holy Communion, because it is very fitting for each one of us, and I always wonder that 4-500 years ago as St. Francis of Assisi composed this prayer that they had the same difficulties that we have today, as we compose this prayer that fits very nicely for

us also. I think some of you already have got it - so we will pray together.

Let us thank God for the opportunity that we all have together today, for this gift of peace that reminds us that we have been created to live that peace, and Jesus became man to bring that good news to the poor. He being God became man in all things



like us except sin, and he proclaimed very clearly that he had come to give the good news. The news was peace to all of goodwill and this is something that we all want - the peace of heart - and God loved the world so much that he gave his son - it was a giving - it is as much as if to say it hurt God to give, because he loved

## Feeling Proud Over Mother Teresa's Canonisation: Modi

**New Delhi, Aug 28 (IANS):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid tributes to Mother Teresa, saying every Indian must feel proud as she has officially been recognised as a saint.

Modi said that despite being not an Indian, Mother Teresa dedicated her whole life serving the Indians.

"Mother Teresa devoted her whole life serving the poor and destitute people in India. When such a person is conferred with sainthood, it is natural for Indians to feel

proud," Modi said in his "Mann Ki Baat" radio address.

He noted that Mother Teresa was an Albanian and English was not her mother tongue.

"Mother Teresa is going to be canonised on September 4. We are sending an official delegation led by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to represent 1.25 crore Indians at the ceremony," Modi said.

Mother Teresa, who arrived in Kolkata on January 6, 1929,

won numerous honours, including the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize.

On October 19, 2003, she was beatified as "Blessed Teresa of Calcutta".

A second miracle was credited to her intercession by Pope Francis in December last year, paving way for her to be recognised as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

Her canonisation is scheduled for September 4, a day before her 19th death anniversary.

the world so much that he gave his son, and he gave him to Virgin Mary, and what did she do with him?

As soon as he came in her life - immediately she went in haste to give that good news, and as she came into the house of her cousin, the child - the unborn child - the child in the womb of Elizabeth, leapt with joy. He was that little unborn child, was the first messenger of peace. He recognised the Prince of Peace, he recognised that Christ has come to bring the good news for you and for me. And as if that was not enough - it was not enough to become a man - he died on the cross to show that greater love, and he died for you and for me and for that leper and for that man dying of hunger and that naked person lying in the street not only of Calcutta, but of Africa, and New York, and London, and Oslo - and insisted that we love one another as he loves each one of us. And we read that in the Gospel very clearly - love as I have loved you - as I love you - as the Father has loved me, I love you - and the harder the Father loved him, he gave him to us, and how much we love one another, we, too, must give each other until it hurts. It is not enough for us to say: I love God, but I do not love my neighbour. St. John says you

are a liar if you say you love God and you don't love your neighbour. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbour whom you see, whom you touch, with whom you live. And so this is very important for us to realise that love, to be true, has to hurt. It hurt Jesus to love us, it hurt him. And to make sure we remember his great love he made himself the bread of life to satisfy our hunger for his love. Our hunger for God, because we have been created for that love. We have been created to love and be loved, and then he has become man to make it possible for us to love as he loved us. He makes himself the hungry one - the naked one - the homeless one - the sick one - the one in prison - the lonely one - the unwanted one - and he says: You did it to me. Hungry for our love, and this is the hunger of our poor people. This is the hunger that you and I must find, it may be in our own home.

I never forget an opportunity I had in visiting a home where they had all these old parents of sons and never forget an opportunity I had in visiting a home where they had all these old parents of sons and daughters who had just put them in an institution and forgotten

maybe. And I went there, and I saw in that home they had everything, beautiful things, but everybody was looking towards the door. And I did not see a single one with their smile on their face. And I turned to the Sister and I asked: How is that? How is it that the people they have everything here, why are they all looking towards the door, why are they not smiling? I am so used to see the smile on our people, even the dying one smile, and she said: This is nearly every day, they are expecting, they are hoping that a son or daughter will come to visit them. They are hurt because they are forgotten, and see - this is where love comes. That poverty comes right there in our own home, even neglect to love. Maybe in our own family we have somebody who is feeling lonely, who is feeling sick, who is feeling worried, and these are difficult days for everybody. Are we there, are we there to receive them, is the mother there to receive the child?

I was surprised in the West to see so many young boys and girls given into drugs, and I tried to find out why - why is it like that, and the answer was: Because there is no one in the family to receive them. Father and mother are so busy they have no time. Young parents are in some institution and the

child takes back to the street and gets involved in something. We are talking of peace. These are things that break peace, but I feel the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a direct war, a direct killing - direct murder by the mother herself. And we read in the Scripture, for God says very clearly: Even if a mother could forget her child - I will not forget you - I have carved you in the palm of my hand. We are carved in the palm of His hand, so close to Him that unborn child has been carved in the hand of God. And that is what strikes me most, the beginning of that sentence, that even if a mother could forget something impossible - but even if she could forget - I will not forget you. And today the greatest means - the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion. And we who are standing here - our parents wanted us. We would not be here if our parents would do that to us. Our children, we want them, we love them, but what of the millions. Many people are very, very concerned with the children in India, with the children in Africa where quite a number die, maybe of malnutrition, of hunger and so on, but millions are dying deliberately by the will of the mother. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace

today. Because if a mother can kill her own child - what is left for me to kill you and you kill me - there is nothing between. And this I appeal in India, I appeal everywhere: Let us bring the child back, and this year being the child's year: What have we done for the child? At the beginning of the year I told, I spoke everywhere and I said: Let us make this year that we make every single child born, and unborn, wanted. And today is the end of the year, have we really made the children wanted? I will give you something terrifying. We are fighting abortion by adoption, we have saved thousands of lives, we have sent words to all the clinics, to the hospitals, police stations - please don't destroy the child, we will take the child. So every hour of the day and night it is always somebody, we have quite a number of unwedded mothers - tell them come, we will take care of you, we will take the child from you, and we will get a home for the child. And we have a tremendous demand from families who have no children, that is the blessing of God for us. And also, we are doing another thing which is very beautiful - we are teaching our beggars, our leprosy patients, our slum dwellers, our people of the street, natural family planning.

And in Calcutta alone in six years - it is all in Calcutta - we have had 61,273 babies less from the families who would have had, but because they practise this natural way of abstaining, of self-control, out of love for each other. We teach them the temperature meter which is very beautiful, very simple, and our poor people understand. And you know what they have told me? Our family is healthy, our family is united, and we can have a baby whenever we want. So clear - those people in the street, those beggars - and I think that if our people can do like that how much more you and all the others who can know the ways and means without destroying the life that God has created in us.

The poor people are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things. The other day one of them came to thank and said: You people who have vowed chastity you are the best people to teach us family planning. Because it is nothing more than self-control out of love for each other. And I think they said a beautiful sentence. And these are people who maybe have nothing to eat, maybe they have not a home where to live, but they are great people. The poor are very wonderful people. One evening



we went out and we picked up four people from the street. And one of them was in a most terrible condition - and I told the Sisters: You take care of the other three, I take of this one that looked worse. So I did for her all that my love can do. I put her in bed, and there was such a beautiful smile on her face. She took hold of my hand, as she said one word only: Thank you - and she died.

I could not help but examine my conscience before her, and I asked what would I say if I was in her place. And my answer was very simple. I would have tried to draw a little attention to myself, I would have said I am hungry, that I am dying, I am cold, I am in pain, or something, but she gave me much more - she gave me her grateful love. And she died with a smile on her face. As that man whom we picked up from the drain, half eaten with worms, and we brought him to the home. I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die like an angel, loved and cared for. And it was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that, who could die like that without blaming anybody, without cursing anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel - this is the greatness of our people. And that is why we believe what

Jesus had said: I was hungry - I was naked - I was homeless - I was unwanted, unloved, uncared for - and you did it to me.

I believe that we are not real social workers. We may be doing social work in the eyes of the people, but we are really contemplatives in the heart of the world. For we are touching the Body of Christ 24 hours. We have 24 hours in this presence, and so you and I. You too try to bring that presence of God in your family, for the family that prays together stays together. And I think that we in our family don't need bombs and guns, to destroy to bring peace - just get together, love one another, bring that peace, that joy, that strength of presence of each other in the home. And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world.

There is so much suffering, so much hatred, so much misery, and we with our prayer, with our sacrifice are beginning at home. Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the action that we do. It is to God Almighty - how much we do it does not matter, because He is infinite, but how much love we put in that action. How

much we do to Him in the person that we are serving.

Some time ago in Calcutta we had great difficulty in getting sugar, and I don't know how the word got around to the children, and a little boy of four years old, Hindu boy, went home and told his parents: I will not eat sugar for three days, I will give my sugar to Mother Teresa for her children. After three days his father and mother brought him to our home. I had never met them before, and this little one could scarcely pronounce my name, but he knew exactly what he had come to do. He knew that he wanted to share his love.

And this is why I have received such a lot of love from you all. From the time that I have come here I have simply been surrounded with love, and with real, real understanding love. It could feel as if everyone in India, everyone in Africa is somebody very special to you. And I felt quite at home I was telling Sister today. I feel in the Convent with the Sisters as if I am in Calcutta with my own Sisters. So completely at home here, right here.

And so here I am talking with you - I want you to find the poor here, right in your own home first. And begin love there.

Be that good news to your own people. And find out about your next-door neighbour - do you know who they are? I had the most extraordinary experience with a Hindu family who had eight children. A gentleman came to our house and said: Mother Teresa, there is a family with eight children, they had not eaten for so long - do something. So I took some rice and I went there immediately. And I saw the children - their eyes shinning with hunger - I don't know if you have ever seen hunger. But I have seen it very often. And she took the rice, she divided the rice, and she went out. When she came back I asked her - where did you go, what did you do? And she gave me a very simple answer: They are hungry also. What struck me most was that she knew - and who are they, a Muslim family - and she knew. I didn't bring more rice that evening because I wanted them to enjoy the joy of sharing. But there were those children, radiating joy, sharing the joy with their mother because she had the love to give. And you see this is where love begins - at home. And I want you - and I am very grateful for what I have received. It has been a tremendous experience and I go back to India - I will be back by next week, the 15th I

hope - and I will be able to bring your love.

And I know well that you have not given from your abundance, but you have given until it has hurt you. Today the little children they have - I was so surprised - there is so much joy for the children that are hungry. That the children like themselves will need love and care and tenderness, like they get so much from their parents. So let us thank God that we have had this opportunity to come to know each other, and this knowledge of each other has brought us very close. And we will be able to help not only the children of India and Africa, but will be able to help the children of the whole world, because as you know our Sisters are all over the world. And with this prize that I have received as a prize of peace, I am going to try to make the home for many people that have no home. Because I believe that love begins at home, and if we can create a home for the poor - I think that more and more love will spread. And we will be able through this understanding love to bring peace, be the good news to the poor. The poor in our own family first, in our country and in the world.

To be able to do this, our Sisters, our lives have to be

woven with prayer. They have to be woven with Christ to be able to understand, to be able to share. Because today there is so much suffering - and I feel that the passion of Christ is being relived all over again - are we there to share that passion, to share that suffering of people. Around the world, not only in the poor countries, but I found the poverty of the West so much more difficult to remove. When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread, I have satisfied.

I have removed that hunger. But a person that is shut out, that feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person that has been thrown out from society - that poverty is so hurtful and so much, and I find that very difficult. Our Sisters are working amongst that kind of people in the West. So you must pray for us that we may be able to be that good news, but we cannot do that without you, you have to do that here in your country.

You must come to know the poor, maybe our people here have material things, everything, but I think that if we all look into our own homes, how difficult we find it sometimes to smile at each other, and that the smile is the beginning of love.

And so let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love, and once we begin to love each other naturally we want to do something. So you pray for our Sisters and for me and for our Brothers, and for our Co-Workers that are around the world. That we may remain faithful to the gift of God, to love Him and serve Him in the poor together with you. What we have done we should not have been able to do if you did not share with your prayers, with your gifts, this continual giving. But I don't want you to give me from your abundance, I want that you give me until it hurts.

The other day I received 15 dollars from a man who has been on his back for twenty years, and the only part that he can move is his right hand. And the only companion that he enjoys is smoking. And he said to me: I do not smoke for one week, and I send you this money. It must have been a terrible sacrifice for him, but see how beautiful, how he shared, and with that money I bought bread and I gave to those who are hungry with a joy on both sides, he was giving and the poor were receiving. This is something that you and I - it is a gift of God to us to be able to share our love with

others. And let it be as it was for Jesus. Let us love one another as he loved us. Let us love Him with undivided love. And the joy of loving Him and each other - let us give now - that Christmas is coming so close. Let us keep that joy of loving Jesus in our hearts. And share that joy with all that we come in touch with. And that radiating joy is real, for we have no reason not to be happy because we have no Christ with us. Christ in our hearts, Christ in the poor that we meet, Christ in the smile that we give and the smile that we receive. Let us make that one point: That no child will be unwanted, and also that we meet each other always with a smile, especially when it is difficult to smile.

I never forget some time ago about fourteen professors came from the United States from different universities. And they came to Calcutta to our house. Then we were talking about that they had been to the home for the dying. We have a home for the dying in Calcutta, where we have picked up more than 36,000 people only from the streets of Calcutta, and out of that big number more than 18,000 have died a beautiful death. They have just gone home to God; and they came to our house and we talked of love, of compassion, and then

one of them asked me: Say, Mother, please tell us something that we will remember, and I said to them: Smile at each other, make time for each other in your family. Smile at each other. And then another one asked me: Are you married, and I said: Yes, and I find it sometimes very difficult to smile at Jesus because he can be very demanding sometimes. This is really something true, and there is where love comes - when it is demanding, and yet we can give it to Him with joy. Just as I have said today, I have said that if I don't go to Heaven for anything else I will be going to Heaven for all the publicity because it has purified me and sacrificed me and made me really ready to go to Heaven. I think that this is something, that we must live life beautifully, we have Jesus with us and He loves us. If we could only remember that God loves me, and I have an opportunity to love others as he loves me, not in big things, but in small things with great love, then Norway becomes a nest of love. And how beautiful it will be that from here a centre for peace has been given. That from here the joy of life of the unborn child comes out. If you become a burning light in the world of peace, then really the Nobel Peace Prize is a gift of the Norwegian people. God bless you!



# Platinum Birthday Celebration of Archbishop Bernard Moras

**MANGALURU:** The extended Moras family and parishioners of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Kuppepadav, celebrated the platinum birthday of their celebrated son - Most Rev Bernard Blasius Moras, at Kuppepadav, on August 17, 2016. Born the fifth child of Francis Moras and Monteen Rodrigues, Most Rev Bernard Moras currently is the Archbishop of Bengaluru and celebrated his 75th birthday in Bengaluru, on August 10, 2016.

Earlier Joseph Moras, nephew of the Archbishop, told reporters on August 14, 2016 that around 10 Bishops from all over Karnataka



will attend the thanksgiving Holy Mass that will be celebrated at the church at 10am. Socio-political and religious leaders from all over the state will join in a public felicitation arranged for the

religious leader of the Catholics after the mass, he said, adding that arrangements are already underway to host the large number of people expected for the event.

## Archbishop Moras: The Person I Know

- Joe Lobo, Kulshekar

As I have known Archbishop Bernard Moras pretty well for many decades, and in fact, having had the privilege of working together in the first major assignment for both of us, I feel it is perhaps fitting that I share my thoughts on this occasion.

It is well known to many the effective and decisive leadership role played by him during the unfortunate days of the serial church attacks by the Hindutva fringe elements with the connivance of the State authorities during the BJP rule

in Karnataka in 2007. The fearless and aggressive stand taken by him while expressing his views against the church attacks to the then Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa, and especially his rather blunt remarks, "What would you do if the sanctum sanctorum of any temple was destroyed and I am prepared to die!," took everybody by surprise and was taken note of by the national and world media and appreciated even at international levels!

Though the unexpected and aggressive reaction was spontaneous and was rather so unlike the normally taciturn and mild person that he is, one must admit that to be decisive and effective are the natural personality traits of this simple and diminutive man of frugal habits nurtured over a long period of nearly 50 years of pastoral and administrative responsibilities. I am fortunate to know this person for more than 40 years now!

Though I had some acquaintance with the young and ever smiling Fr. Moras in the early 1970s, when he was the Assistant Director of St. Antony's Charitable Poor Homes (Orphanage) in Mangalore, it was during his tenure as Acting Director of Fr. Muller Hospital at Kankanady in 1975-77 that I came to know him intimately. Though still young, he had already started losing hair possibly due to the pressures of work during the turbulent times at the hospital.

Troubled times bring people together. We really jelled and toiled together in 1975-77, and strived to do our best to bring order and systems at Fr. Muller's. A team of five Fr. Moras, (Acting Director), late Dr (Sr) Immaculate (Medical Superintendent), late Sr Gonzaga, (Nursing Superintendent), George Sebastian (Accounts Officer) and myself (Personnel Officer) - worked together and in close intimacy at the time. And we very well understood one another. Crisis bring out the best in people and in those days of strikes, gheraos and personal abuses, I could perceive the goodness, sincerity and dedication in Fr. Moras.

I vividly remember one afternoon when an agitating group of more than 40 employees led by their Union leader barged into the office of the director and hurled abuses and personal insults at him, who was alone in his office from about 2.30 to 4.30 pm almost non-stop! I admired his patience and restrained responses. He refused to be provoked by their personal insults

and abuses which were really vitriolic.

When I tried to intervene by opening the door from the anteroom, he just signaled me not to bother to call for any outside help and he would handle the situation himself. Believe me, till now I have not witnessed any other "abusive session" of that low standard in my life and it was done by a group of Catholics against a priest some forty years ago, when all religious persons were revered by all, especially by the faithful!

Our concern for one another was mutual. Once when I was confined to my office room by the workers for more than a couple of hours and was not allowed to contact or telephone anybody (mobile phones were yet to arrive then) and finally forcefully led to the bus-stand to go home, I was pleasantly surprised and simply touched by the gesture of Fr. Moras, who took pains to reach my house by driving through an alternative road and anxiously inquiring about my welfare!

His concern and affection for others, irrespective of their calling or stature in life, have earned him friends and well-wishers everywhere; be it in Fr. Muller Hospital, Catholic Hospital Association of India, New Delhi (of which he was Executive Director), St John's Medical College, Belgaum Diocese or Bangalore Archdiocese.

His contribution to voluntary healthcare and education in India is immense and well recognized even at the Vatican and other international circles. Yet, he has

remained the same simple, honest, hard-working and straight-forward human being without displaying any pretentious or "diplomatic" skills to wriggle out of difficult and tricky situations, which he had to face in life umpteen times!

People may misunderstand him at times. But nobody will doubt his integrity and honesty. In whatever administrative position that he held, he has seen that proper administrative and financial controls were scrupulously followed by all concerned. While dealing with official matters, he has always remained strictly formal and conscientious with his staff members, and has always been a friendly and humane person. In spite of his busy official schedule, he takes time out to bless nuptials, conduct funeral masses, etc., of relatives, of his staff members, even in outstations.

Though generous in extending hospitality to others, he has always remained frugal in his own food habits. I still remember the joke made by Fr Derrick Fernandes (then vicar general of Belgaum, now Bishop of Karwar) at a lunch I had with them in Belgaum Bishop's House; "even for close friends food will be always simple!" Simple food, it will always be: "fish curry, rice and vegetables" and, that too, in moderate quantities! I have never seen or heard of him sipping (other than Sacramental Wine) or imbibing spirits - not the Holy Spirit, which I am sure always guides and blesses him as is Mother Mary!

*(The writer is Director, International Relations, Christ University)*

# Archbishop Bernard Moras:

## A Song of Simplicity

- By Gabriel Vaz

*On turning 75, including a dozen years of Archiepiscopacy, Daijiworld Weekly's Special Correspondent in Bangalore, Gabriel Vaz, interviewed the Archbishop of Bangalore Most Rev Dr Bernard Blasius Moras, on the challenges faced by him and his work.*

- Gabriel Vaz

"With the exception of music, I have tried my hand at everything." - That was the wistful remark of Archbishop Most Rev Dr Bernard Blasius Moras, who turned 75 on August 10, 2016, when I met him for an interview.

"You know me rather well and have been frequently meeting me. Why do you need an interview", he asks me smilingly.

When I see him, I notice the slight wrinkles on his face, balding pate and his frail body. But the tough schedule that he is maintaining day in and day out, rising up at dawn and winding up the day or rather going to bed late in the night, reading and praying, one would never imagine that this man of God is a ripe old 75. I sometimes wonder how he manages to pack so much work almost every day regularly. Perhaps it is his Spartan regimen, frugal food habits and simple

lifestyle and, of course, the discipline of mind and body.

Coming back to music, he tells me: "I did try to learn singing as best as I could. But I know I am not a good singer nor is my voice very melodious. God doesn't bless all with the same talents or abilities. It is for us to make the best use of our abilities and talents for his greater glory and the service of mankind."

Born on August 10, 1941, he recalls that there was a small Government-run Kannada medium primary school in his village where students were taught up to Class V. "The next nearest school was in Hospet, about 10 kms away, where I studied till I went to Mangalore for my high school studies," he says.

From his childhood, affectionately called Benna by his family and friends, he was very studious, devout and conditioned to a life of prayer combined with discipline. The fifth of nine children of the God-fearing couple -- Francis Alexander Moras and Monthin Rodrigues of Kuppepadavu near Hospet in Mangalore taluk in Dakshina Kannada district - priestly vocation was the most obvious and natural choice, and young Benna excelled in everything

during his formation at the Seminary.

Being ordained a priest on December 6, 1967, he was the first to become a priest in the family. Coming as he did from an agricultural background, he was good at gardening and much sought-after basketball player during his formation. He later did a degree course from Karnataka University besides diplomas in hospital administration, personnel management and pastoral care in hospitals from Delhi University, besides Ecclesiastical Studies at the St Joseph's Seminary.

His first assignment was as Assistant Director and Chaplain of St Antony's Charitable Institutions at Jeppu. Even as he was getting himself firmly established, he was shifted to the nearby Fr Muller Hospital at Kankanady as Assistant Director. The stint at Fr Muller's was tough and challenging besides being one of the most turbulent period in the hospital's history with a most exasperating workers strike and unrest. He soldiered on and soon became its director and one must admit paved the way for the growth of the hospital to its present pre-eminent position.

Having proved his mettle, he was appointed as the Executive Director of the Catholic Hospitals



Association of India (CHAI), New Delhi. But circumstances in CHAI forced Fr. Moras to return home to Mangalore Diocese and appointed the Acting Parish Priest of the Mother of Sorrows Church in Udupi. But that was the shortest real pastoral assignment.

Obviously, his experience in managing and running the Mangalore Diocesan hospital in trying circumstances must have impressed the highest ecclesial body of Indian Catholics, the Catholic Bishops' Council of India (CBCI), New Delhi, that he was handpicked by CBCI to run its only medical college and hospital of St John's in Bangalore as administrator from May 1980 till May 1991, when the hospital witnessed rapid expansion and many specialized wings as also the Nursing School, which later became a College. After the long stint at St John's, Fr. Moras went back to Mangalore Diocese to be appointed again as the Director of Fr. Muller Charitable Institutions and Hospital for another six years.

But that must have surely paved the way for his rise with the appointment as the Bishop of Belgaum Diocese on December 31, 1996. Within seven years, he was elevated to the most challenging post of being the Archbishop of Bangalore on July 27, 2004 and installed on September 17, 2004. In between, he served as the Apostolic Administrator of Bellary Diocese

from June 21, 2006 to March 15, 2008.

He has been Chairman of the CBCI Health Commission for 8 years, which resulted in introduction of many health programmes for creating awareness, treatment and control of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB under the newly-formed CBCI-CARD Society. As Chairman of the Commission, he has been the Advisor for CHAI. He was also appointed as the member of the Pontifical Commission for Pastoral Health Care - Vatican, Rome, representing the CBCI.

He keeps himself busy in not only the pastoral work of the Archdiocese but in the affairs of the Karnataka Regional Catholic Bishops' Council (KRCBC), Karnataka Catholic Bishops' Council, St Peter's Pontifical Seminary and Institute and Dharmaram Vidya Kshethram and also in the running of his pet organisations of Action Sought for Holistic Advancement (ASHA) Charitable Trust, Bangalore Multipurpose Social Service Society (BMSSS) and the All Karnataka United Christians' Forum for Human Rights (AKUCFHR).

Meticulous and diligent in all his activities besides being transparent and hard-working, Archbishop would put to shame not just his contemporaries but much younger priests and laypersons with his busy schedule from morning till late night and back again to the same grind. It

is his no-nonsense but business-like approach that has brought transparency in the financial management of the Churches and its assets. Though he bore the brunt of the tussle of internal squabbling by a section of the priests, often masquerading as crusaders for the propagation of Karnataka's official language of Kannada but in reality for their own narrow, selfish ends, it must be admitted that he has almost succeeded in solving the language issue pestering the Archdiocese for nearly a quarter century!

The interview: Jesus Christ is my master

DW: Congratulations on completing 75 years, including 12 years as the Archbishop of Bangalore.

A. Thank you. I have been truly blessed, received abundant blessings from God and His protection in every moment of my life and have been able successfully face all the challenges to the best of my abilities. I am grateful to all those who have helped me in this long and eventful journey. I have done my best.

Q. What is the most challenging assignment in your priestly life?

A. I would say all assignments were challenging and tough in their respective context and situation. But I feel my first responsibility as Assistant Director and Chaplain of St Antony's Charitable Institutions at Jeppu,

Mangaluru, was a real test because it was my first assignment after being ordained priest. I had to take care of as many as 625 inmates from a 1-day-old infant to very old persons, the sick and bed-ridden besides mentally and physically challenged.

Q. How about your posting as Assistant Director of Fr Fuller's Hospital?

A. From St Antony's in Jeppu, I was posted to Fr Muller's at Kankanady. Though both are within walking distance, the responsibilities were entirely different. I had to deal with highly educated, professionally qualified persons from senior Doctors to Nurses and religious sisters, who were experienced Nurses themselves. I also had to cope with the challenges of administering a big institution like a hospital, the only major hospital of the Mangalore Diocese. But this challenging task gave me confidence, knowledge and certain amount of courage for my future.

Q. After your stint in Fr Muller's, you were not assigned a parish in the Diocese but deputed to CBCI to be the Executive Director of the Catholic Hospitals Association of India (CHAI), New Delhi.

A. I did hope that after my ordination, I would be assigned to a parish as we seminarians normally do. But my posting

at CHAI was brief. Within one and half years, I was asked to serve at St John's in Bangalore, which was also under the CBCI.

Q. But your stint at St John's was pretty long...

A. True. I served the St John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bangalore, for 11 years as Director of the Hospital and also Treasurer for CBCI's Society for Medical Education. I had to deal with Doctors and Medical staff at the Hospital as I did at Fr Muller's but also constantly interact with various Bishops all over India. I also had to see to the growth of the Hospital as it was in its initial stages. I had to work for the entire Catholic Church in India. This experience broadened my vision and outlook for the Church and society. After 11 years of service, I had to go back to Fr Muller's for a second term as its director.

Q. How would you describe your second term at Fr Muller's better?

A. When I came back to the same place again, the Hospital was on its path of progress and growth trajectory. Several new courses including post-graduation for medical studies in allopathic and homeopathic as well as nursing were started. In fact, the process of starting a full-fledged medical college, the first for a Diocese, was also planned. I, however,

could not see to its implementation as I had to take up new responsibility within 6 years.

Q. That must have been your appointment as Bishop of Belgaum?

A. Yes. My appointment was like a bolt from the blue. I knew nothing about the Belgaum Diocese and had not mentally equipped myself for shouldering such a responsibility as the thought had never occurred to me even in my wildest dreams! I accepted the responsibility with all humility and obedience. The seven and half years in the Episcopal ministry were devoted to the overall growth of the Diocese. "Christian presence in every taluk" was my goal and I think I succeeded to a great extent.

Q. Are you satisfied with your long tenure of last 12 years as Archbishop of Bangalore?

A. Definitely these are really the most trying times in my life. My responsibilities were diverse and duties quite onerous. I had to look after the pastoral care of the entire Archdiocese and the numerous institutions within its fold. The improvement of the Archdiocese, looking after the upkeep of the parishes as the spiritual head, improving the infrastructure of parishes, various institutions, starting new parishes, churches, schools and other educational

as well as social service institutions and the pastoral care of different linguistic groups and regions. I also had to deal with the long-standing language problem in the Archdiocese. But God has been very kind to me and the Archdiocese.

I have experienced lots of love and acceptance from all sections of the faithful and society at large, though there have been some unpleasant situations here and there.

Q. The language issue has been a serious problem?

A. It was. But I am happy that the vexed issue of language in

the liturgy has finally been resolved with a Decree from Rome approving the new language policy. There is a place for faithful of every language in the Church to take care of their pastoral needs. The process of implementing language policy is on. It can be done with a policy of give and take.

Q. Looking back on the last 12 years, do you have any regrets or feel that you could have done better in the Archdiocese?

A. I do not have any regret over any decisions that I have taken. I know that all my steps were taken after deep reflection,

thoughts and prayers plus widest possible consultations within and outside. I know in my heart of hearts that whatever decisions that I took, were done in the larger interests of the Church and in conformity with its norms. I feel the responsibility of serving as Archdiocese is much more and perhaps ten times more taxing than when I was the Bishop of Belgaum. What I can confidently assert is that Church comes first to me and I will always do what my conscience tells me. I may be a shepherd of the people but my savior Jesus Christ is my master!

## Golden Jubilee Celebration of Indore Church Concludes

The golden jubilee celebrations of the St Joseph Church, Nandanagar in Indore culminated on August 14.

The final day celebrations began at 8 a.m. on Sunday with a short procession of priests, nuns and devotees followed by the Eucharist.

The Holy mass was concelebrated by Bishop ChackoThottumarickal of Indore, Bishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal, Bishop Sebastian Vadakkal of Ujjain diocese and around 15 other priests including parish priest, Fr Thomas Rajmanikam.

During the Holy mass, bishops remembered the contribution of Mother Baptista

and Fr Henry who helped this parish grow from a small church to one of the most beautiful and biggest churches of the city.

The three-day long celebration that began on Friday concluded



on Sunday evening with a cultural programme and community dinner wherein all parish members were invited.

"The three-day celebration included spiritual and cultural celebrations," said Fr Rajmanikam.

Not only the present parish members, but devotees who were earlier a part of the church and have shifted elsewhere were also a part of the jubilee celebrations.

"We have been a part of this church since the beginning and the faith and association from this church is such that our three generations have come to attend this function," said Gracy and Simon David, who have been a part of the parish since the past 48 years.



# Being Equals in a Diverse Polity

- Valerian Rodrigues

Increasingly, we are in societies, which are deeply different not merely in their ways of life, but also in their modes of thinking and ethical priorities. On one hand, we speak of an emerging world which is all before us, more flat and homogenous, largely due to space technologies, communication revolution and migration of peoples, but on the other hand, we have become more than ever aware that our neighbor is different from us, acts and behaves in ways that we can little fathom, and there is very little we can do to bring him to our ways of being and thinking. One of the pronounced tendencies of our times is termed 'othering', i.e., to regard people who are like us human as different, that we should keep them under watch, and most of our social ailments arise from them. In this context, I wish to focus on one specific issue: How can small communities who feel different from the rest in significant ways be included in a polity dominated by larger communities, and powerful interests, as equals? Confronted with the latter, the tendency of small communities is to rush into the arms of those who are akin, and to imagine and even invent common roots and belonging.

The world that is behind us was organized around a set of codes, shared citizenship, equality of treatment and equality before law. I wish to argue that today norms such as equality of treatment and equality before law that liberals brandish before us for the purpose may not be adequate. Equal opportunities may prove elusive to marginal groups. In such contexts,

small communities, losing all hopes of living a life of being equal, may tend to carve out their own ghettos. Instead of walking into the broader society accessing its resources and enhancing their abilities and capacities, they may sulk and fret falling an easy prey to vested interests.

In a large number of liberal and electoral democracies, there is much evidence to suggest that a deep discontent is simmering today among small communities who otherwise regard themselves as different. Many societies which earlier resorted to a multicultural approach to reach out to such communities today think that ignoring and bracketing out difference in public policy is the best way to contain dissent within them. This shift in public policy is justified on the ground that the freedoms of the minority community cannot undermine those of the majority. Such a policy invariably calls into question the deeply held beliefs of members of the small communities, leave alone constraining their participation in public affairs. It would make the lives of the members of small communities vacuous by undermining their beliefs and commitments as of no consequence; or force small communities to fall in line with the dominant beliefs in the polity; or simply let resentment brew among the former calling into question the legitimacy of a polity. What is wrong with the way these societies have perceived and institutionalized equality?

## Liberal Equality

Let me clear my ground a little: While equality of treatment and

equality before law were pronounced as the ideals of our age, and we deferred to them, they were rarely so on the ground.

Besides, even if equality of treatment was assured in law it was not opposed to unequal treatment in significant respects because skills and competences of people varied, and consequently their awards. Inheritance based on property and parental endowments extended differential life chances to people without working for them. This fact was amply demonstrated in market relations, in the civil parlance, in our choice of friends and companions, in the status that people enjoyed and in political dynamics. But we always felt that it was possible to arrive at a world where these ideals will be realized. That they are the stock on which most people will agree, or should be made to do so. This does not seem to be the case any more!

Equality before law is a species of equality of treatment. While equality of treatment pertains to the entire domain of social life, including interpersonal relations, equality before law pertains only to the authoritative sphere of law. It implies that all are equal under the law; and law will not make discrimination among those falling within its ambit. While equality before law like equality of treatment holds out a promise to small communities against majoritarian assertion, and within communities against denial of equality of



treatment, it is an inadequate protection for small communities.

Against the limits of the notion of equality of treatment liberal democrats have resorted to a richer notion of equality. It proposes equal liberties to all to pursue certain basic social goods such as resources and needs, skills and capacities, opportunities and powers without compromising their self-respect. For the purpose it calls for a level-playing field to all members of a polity irrespective of their belonging. It means access to and availability of what people regard as equally good education, health facilities, employment opportunities, freedoms of speech and expression, and political participation, ably captured by Professor Amartya Sen in his concepts of capacity and development. However, there could be many in a society who due to natural circumstances and social obstacles unable to access these capacities and talents equally, such as the physically challenged, dalits and low castes etc. Liberal democrats will, therefore, argue that such disadvantages be attended to or compensated through preferential measures to enable everyone equal access to the social goods enumerated above. Undoubtedly, equality understood in this particular way is a progressive measure, particularly in a country like ours, where inequality looms large in accessing basic capacities. But I would regard it as still inadequate!

### **Why Equality of Treatment is Inadequate?**

Equality understood as equality of treatment or equal liberties, tends to weigh in favour of the majority: The argument in favour of equality of treatment rests on the presupposition that society is primarily composed of discrete

individuals and the sole criterion that governs their relation are the capacities, powers and entitlements they have to proffer. There is little to support the presupposition behind this assumption, and the consequences that follow from it are deeply suspect. Society is not composed of discrete individuals, but of persons who are indelibly marked by the culture and social relations they inhabit. Even if a person believes that he has freed himself from such bonds, he/she may be deeply mistaken about it, while others are not prepared to accept his/her word for it. Public policy, even in the best of circumstances, is overtly sensitive to modes of thinking and practices of the majority, i.e., majoritarian culture, and concede to the minorities autonomy in this regard with an assurance that they could precipitate a majority of their choice. But cultures being what they are, are not malleable for a turn of this kind, and once a majority is in place would employ social resources to reinforce themselves. Political majorities anchored on social majorities would employ the sovereign power of the state to aggrandize themselves. In fact the very categories of deciding what is good and bad, and right and wrong, deserving and non-deserving are drawn from the familiar ground of the majority. Cultural domination stares at every small community asking it to fall in line.

It is important to stress the fact that what others think of us informs what we are. Given this social fact we can hardly imagine society as an aggregation of discrete individuals. Treating people as equals would therefore mean very different from equality of treatment. It would definitely be treating people as equal by factoring in culture, and ensuring that the social

relations that dominate a society provide every opportunity to people to act and be equals. Such a consideration can be traded off only in deference to a value that we regard as equally important such as freedoms. We can illustrate this argument by referring to a society structured by caste and untouchability. The everyday culture and social relations of such a society are governed by values, beliefs and social practices make a mockery of equality of persons, if it is defined as equality of treatment. Treating people as equal in such a society would be meting out different treatment to people to the extent caste and untouchability affect people. When Babasaheb Ambedkar led thousands of his followers to Buddhism he saw it as a cultural turn to assert the equality of persons.

Secondly, small communities share thick bonds across its members, made of beliefs, values, concerns and social practices. In other words, they have distinct culture that marks them off from others. To the extent these bonds constitute a comprehensive view on life, and there are reasonable grounds in defense of it, it is second to none. Every reasonable comprehensive view is equal to others, and they can be transformed only by reasoning across the interlocutors involved. Sometimes an approach that a group of people uphold may not be comprehensive, but to the extent elements within such an approach are distinct from other contending views of life, this distinctiveness has to be respected and be treated on par with a comprehensive view. Treating people who belong to small communities as equal would, therefore, mean, treating them differently from others in respects in which they are different. Such

difference may call for respecting the autonomy of such communities as well as opportunity to interaction with the broader society at different levels.

Contrast such a treatment with equality of treatment: Often, the markers that members of small communities carry tends to categorize them as the other, who have to work hard to prove that they possess the capacities and skills that a culture holds aloft, while members of the majority or dominant social relations have it easy for them. For instance what would it be to tell a Muslim that the Indian nation extends equality of treatment to all its members irrespective of community? Being a Muslim he or she would like to be treated as equal not irrespective of community, but being a member of the community. Being formed by a culture where this difference is significant, he or she would like to have the autonomy to express this difference as well as interact with the rest of the society as informed by this difference. To the contrary in a diverse society members of the majority community or the dominant perspective can easily carry their markers in the name of nationalism, while if a member of small communities do so he or she has to explain themselves. There is a reverse cordoning off too which takes place where vested interests as guardians of communities erect barriers and prevent members of the communities from interacting with others. In the process, they do not merely prevent them from expressing what they regard as significant about themselves, but also stop them from achieving those things that interaction affords. While cruder examples are before us aplenty, taming of small communities can easily be done, by other subtler gestures,

such as body language or even a gaze!

The distinctiveness in and through which small communities define themselves as different is often expressed in terms of personal laws or customary laws, and whole identity of small communities rests on sustaining such differences. Sometimes, the reason to be considered different could be on grounds of belonging to a distinct language group. While there is no reason to idealize customary laws or reproduction of persons as belonging to specific linguistic communities, there are enough reasons to preserve them, and not to exit to other communities. Take, for instance, a feature of the customary law among the indigenous communities in Northeast India: One of its outstanding aspect is not penalize and exclude a member of a community for an offence committed, but of reparation for the wrong done, manifest repentance for the same with restoration of an order that is seen as violated. Similarly some provisions of the Sharia are grounded on a distinct religious perspective that Muslim communities bear. While there is much in these systems that is meant to protect privilege and vested interests, as in the case of constitutional and legal systems everywhere, it should be the members of these groups who should decide what is pertinent and what is not, rather than a legal regime bearing on them in the name of equality before law.

#### **Positive measures called for:**

How to positivize the claim of people to be equal? Let me illustrate the issue through the Nehruian regime. The Nehruian regime was highly elitist. But it is an elitism of certain grace and

sensitivity to minorities. Nehru accommodated representatives of the minorities at various levels of party, government, and even emerging civil society in India. But such accommodation was informal, and the majoritarian thrust invariably asserted itself. Subsequently when the Indira Gandhi regime accommodated minorities it was much more instrumental rather than principled. The slide has continued over the years, and I feel no one can escape responsibility of the demonic situation we are in today.

Small communities in India who regard themselves as culturally different need to find representation in the formal structures of authority, and their voices should be equally valuable. In India this should apply to Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Adivasis, etc. Electoral representation does not provide adequate space for it. How we can go about doing it, is a complex issue. One of the ways for the same is to make the upper houses of the legislature, including the Rajya Sabha, representative, and the mode of representation is such that authentic representatives of small communities are members of the same. But it will also mean, promoting different kinds of social practices and civic action, where beliefs, values and institutions of small communities are not seen as practices of minorities but of equals. It would also mean an open culture to negotiate and live with, where members of communities could learn from each other, appreciate, and live very different lives than what they have led. If the argument that I have made above stands, then it would mean a different kind of education, where learning is permeated by exposure to the cultures of small communities as equals.



# Light Up The Darkest of Places

- By Janina Gomes

With the skies dark outside and pelting rain, it seemed appropriate that I got a Forward from a nun friend -- a prayer which says, "Woman of God, let your light shine in the darkest places, where it is impossible to love". That was a challenge to me, since I have been feeling unloving to many of late.

The darkest places are often the places of sin, where accumulated hatreds and prejudices have corroded the soul over many years. In what way could I help the divine light to penetrate the darkness? The first thing I thought of was that I could smile more often, to bring cheer all around.

I could be more gracious even if I met with hostility. I could share a biscuit with a friend and I could give them a good book or article to read. Perhaps, I could help an elderly to clear her fridge of old food. I could be feeling uncomfortable and irritated by the noise made by young students in the lift, but I could try to be friendly, not always grouchy.

The list makes me sound like an old woman already, but it is true. I am no longer able to do remarkable things, but the darkest places for me are those just around my little room, where I could still meet the unmet needs of those who are now frail, feeble and in the evening of their lives.

The journey within is the hardest of all because that's where we

encounter the most darkness. The same prayer says that God is there for us, always with us, with unconditional love. And so, when I wake up in the morning, I thank Him for the grace of a good night's sleep. I welcome the canteen boy, when he walks in with my breakfast tray at the YWCA, whether it is Upma, Idli, Poha or Masala Dosa. Just as the joys of life have become small ones, the ways in which I spread God's light have become small too.

When I first read the prayer about shining in the darkest places, my thoughts went instantly to working for prisoners, criminals, prostitutes and what have you. After ruminating on it after my afternoon siesta, I began to think differently. The darkness is where I am at the moment. All I need to do is to become a little more human by accepting my flaws and limitations.

It is strange how 'holy' people try to be 'perfect', when all they are asked to do is to accept their imperfections and work with them to help recreate the world. God's love is after all for 'imperfect' human beings like us.

When I look at God's creations, I can see that there are human beings of every shape, size and colour, sometimes even the absurd and ridiculous. So few are 'beautiful' in the sense of physical beauty. To love all these is to bring the light of love to the darkest

places. Simpler than we thought, isn't it?

This is an ordinary recipe for ordinary folk like you and me. So, now I do not think of 'Woman of God' as an awesome title that I can never inherit. In my own little room and with the little I do, I can still be a 'Woman of God'. I will live and work quietly and I hope die quietly. And I hope to find the gates of heaven opened for me because I smiled often, joked sometimes and gave the canteen boy a small tip for fetching my tea.

## Rare Occasion: Nuns watch TV

Having stayed away from TV sets all their life, hundreds of nuns of Missionaries of charity in Kolkata on September 4, 2016 made an exception when they were glued to the screens beaming Mother Teresa's canonisation ceremony alive. At the Mother House, headquarters of the congregation and home of the saint, three large TVs were brought from outside so that the nuns can watch the sainthood ceremony.

## Stamp on Mother Teresa Released

To celebrate Mother Teresa canonisation, India Post on August 4, 2016 released a commemorative postage stamp on her. Union Minister of State for Communications Manoj Sinha unveiled the stamp at a function in the Divine Child High School at Andheri, Mumbai.

# Archbishop Raphael Cheenath is no more

Archbishop Raphael Cheenath, who led Cuttack-Bhubaneswar archdiocese when the worst persecution hit the region, passed away August 14, 2016 in a Mumbai hospital. He was 82.

The funeral took Place on August 17, 2016 in Mumbai, where he was spending his retirement days under the care of his confreres of Divine Word Congregation.

Archbishop Cheenath, as the senior metropolitan archbishop in the region, gave leadership to the Church in Odisha when the anti-Christian wave swept the eastern Indian state.

Kandhamal district, which comes directly under his archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, was the most hit in 2008 when the worst anti-Christian violence in India's modern history swept the state.

During the violence some 60,000 had to flee to the forests to save their lives when Hindu fanatics attacked some 6,000 houses, burning down many of them. More than 100 people were killed, and many women, including Catholic nuns, were gang raped.

Archbishop Cheenath "died a winner" since the Supreme Court

of India August 2, 2016 granted his petition for enhanced relief to the victims of the violence against the Christian community of Kandhamal.



"He stoutly fought for justice. When the Odisha government refused NGOs and civil society to distribute relief among Kandhamal victims and survivors, he took the matters to the Supreme Court and got the state government order cancelled", said the national bishops' conference in a statement.

At the time of his retirement, Archbishop Cheenath had lauded Christians of Kandhamal for setting an example of living the faith in a hostile environment.

"You have raised the faith into new heights at the face of death. I am proud of you," he told some 3,000 people at Raikia, a divisional headquarters in Kandhamal district.

Archbishop Raphael Cheenath was born on 30 December 1934, at Manalur, in present day Trichur Archdiocese.

He was ordained Divine Word priest in 1963 at the age 28. He became the Bishop of Sambalpur on 18 May 1974 at the age of 39, after some working in the SVD headquarters in Rome.

He was appointed as the Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar on 1 July 1985 at the age of 50 and installed as the fifth Archbishop of the Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Metropolitan Archdiocese on 11 August 1985. On 11th February 2011 at the age of 76 he retired from the office of the archbishop.

He was a priest for 53 years and a bishop for 42 years.

# ‘Not marking Churches in DP not an Omission’

- BMC Commissioner

**Mumbai:** In a first, Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) commissioner Ajoy Mehta has written to the Archbishop of Bombay, putting to rest apprehensions in the community over the fact that several heritage churches have not been marked in the draft Development Plan (DP) 2034. Mehta has clarified that not marking churches does not amount to omission but it is part of a “considered policy” for the draft DP.

On July 27, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, had spoken to Mehta and voiced the Christian community's concerns that heritage churches such as Mount Mary Basilica, Mount Carmel and St Andrew's Church were not marked in the draft DP, unlike in the earlier DP.

The BMC move comes even before the official hearings for the suggestions and objections submitted to the civic body begins.

Now Mehta, in a written reply to the Archbishop's House, has clarified that this is not an error and assured that all structures marked in the earlier DPs that already stand developed would

continue to be termed as “designations” in the subsequent DPs.

The BMC letter, a copy of which is with TOI, explains the term “designation” as “a public amenity provided or aided by an

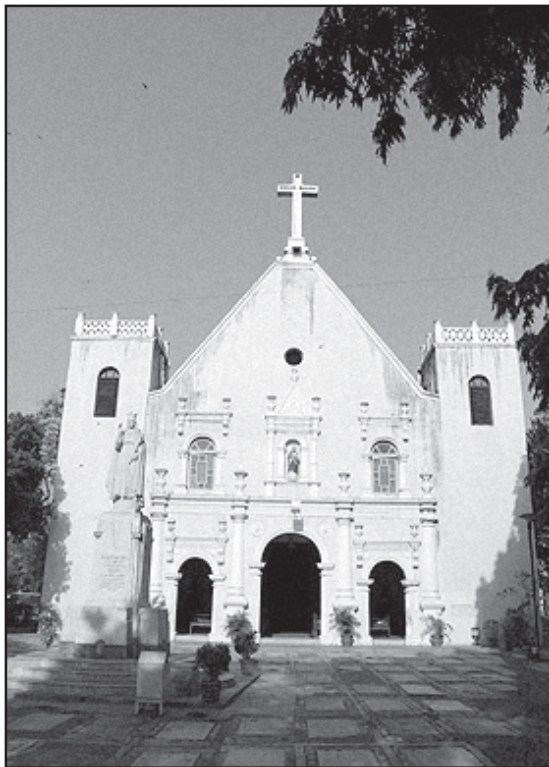
in the earlier DPs that already stand developed would post-development continue to be termed as designations in the subsequent DPs. Such designations continue till the time they exist, unless altered or rescinded by an order of the competent authority,” states the letter.

The letter has further clarified that since a designation assumes the characteristics of a public amenity, designating one subjects it to possible acquisition. “Acquisition is a two-way street. Either the MCGM as the planning authority can initiate acquisition or the owner could seek its acquisition after a lapse of ten years. In case of churches under discussion, this is neither the intended purpose of the BMC nor of the owning private body,” the letter further states.

BMC commissioner Ajoy Mehta confirmed the letter to TOI. The Archbishop

of Bombay was not available for comment as he was travelling. However, it is learned that the archdiocese's estate department, as well as legal and development experts are in the process of studying the contents of the letter.

*Souce: The Time of India*



appropriate authority on a parcel of land. Designations by inference are reservations that have already been developed. It also follows that designations were reservations in the earlier DPs and have since fructified in terms of provisions of specified public amenities. Hence, all designations





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