

Vishāl Jāgriti

A National Catholic Laity Magazine

Vol - 3

No - 05

August 2016

St. Lawrence Minor Basilica Proclamation & Dedication



Congratulations

On your *50th*

Sacerdotal
Golden
jubilee



Rt. Rev. Dr. **Stanley Roman** M.A, Ph.L, S.T.L

With Best Wishes & Prayers...

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CODP Building, Padua,
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Subscription:- for 1 Year Rs.200
for 2 Years Rs.375
for 3 Years Rs.550

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Editorial...



Rising with Grit and Determination

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but rising every time we fall." So said Confucius, the great ancient Chinese philosopher (551-479 BC). Twenty-two centuries later, Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist and poet (1803-1882) said pretty much the same thing: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall". This is the positive and optimistic theme which is even the anchor of Christianity.

Please bear this in mind when you receive this re-revived copy of Vishal Jagriti. Even in war, there are strategic suspensions and withdrawals to review and re-launch the attack. We are not taxing you with post-mortems and excuses. This time, we hope, it is for real and we will march forward with grit and determination – on the wings of your support.

If you look around, we have two leading Catholic English publications in India which are diocese-centred. We hope to evolve VJ into a pan-India English publication run by lay Catholics and project issues which are beyond the limitations of clergy-bound publications.

Beyond issues, VJ would strive to monitor and cover news and views of Indian Catholic laity spread across the country. This is where local leaders of lay organisations like diocesan and parish constituencies of AICU come in. We have a dedicated band of enlightened writers who will contribute in-depth editorial inputs. But, we are very keen on offering VJ as a nation-wide forum to report activities under the AICU umbrella. In this issue, we have crisp reports from Delhi, Jalandhar, Udupi and Kerala. We welcome more such, with related sharp photos, from more centres.

We have a concept of "pump-priming" which involves injection of fluid into a pump to coax it to start working. In the present issue the cover article and one more are Mangalore-centric. We look forward to covering major developments in dioceses or centres across India. For it to happen in a systematic and sustained basis, we would welcome local units to nominate correspondents who will feed VJ.

Finally, We want to evolve VJ into a "Thought Exchange". We are publishing articles which are something controversial and thought provoking. Get provoked and respond with your views.

Happy reading.

-Lancy D'Cunha, Editor

With Minor Basilica Status, The Way Ahead For Karkala–Attur as a Renowned Pilgrimage Centre in India

- By H. R. Alva

Holy Father Pope Francis has elevated the St Lawrence Shrine Church at Attur–Karkala to the status of a Minor Basilica through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament by its Decree dated 26 April 2016. The Udupi Diocese under the leadership of Bishop Gerald Isaac Lobo celebrated this rarest of the rare honour and title on 1st August 2016 with proclamation of the Decree of the elevation of the Shrine to the status of Minor Basilica and its dedication. It is a proud moment and a matter of joy for all who know Karkal – Attur St. Lawrence Shrine.

For me visiting Karkal – Attur church has been great experience every time. During childhood I was waiting for ‘Karkoll festh’ (Festival of Karkala - Attur Church). After my marriage with Concepta (since 25 years) the occasions to visit Attur church were increased. Her sister Catherine who is known as Reena, wife of Nakre George Castelino (Receipient of National Best Teacher Award) lives in Nakre with her family. George is very much involved in Attur shrine activities. One can see him during the annual festival days announcing the events. It is our

regular practice to visit the Attur Church while visiting George – Reena family at least 3 – 4 times a year.

In 1980s and ‘90s I was serving as the leader of the youth in the Diocese of Mangalore. During that time the youth activities of Karkala denary were being organized normally at Attur. I had the privilege to attend a few of them.

In 2001, the Bi-Centenary celebrations of Attur church were held. In commemoration of that landmark event the present beautiful new church (I presume that the church structure may also be responsible for obtaining the Minor Basilica status) was built under the leadership of the then parish priest Fr. Joswey Fernandes and it was inaugurated on 21st January 2001. To mark the occasion I had brought out 8 pages special supplement of the then prevailing ‘Janavahini’ Kannada daily under Maria

Advertisers banner. To organize articles etc for this supplement I had to go to Attur for about five times.

During all these occasions my thoughts were that people come to Attur and fulfil their spiritual needs even though there were no good roads from near and far places and especially from the bus stops to the church. It was difficult to get autorickshaws / taxis from the main roads. They had to rely on their feet. Around the church nothing was available to quench their hunger and thirst, except on the days of annual festival.

I have visited several pilgrimage centers in various states in India and a few abroad including Lourdes in France. Many centres have good road / rail connectivity. Also there are facilities like auto / taxis, pay and use toilets, washrooms, rest rooms and lodging, etc,



provided either by the centres or by philanthropists or by enterprising people. Such centres have auto/taxi stands, shops, boarding and lodging facilities, etc. But at Attur there are no such facilities (Of course of late roads have been developed, shrine administration has provided a few facilities inside the premises). It is true that shrines and pilgrimage centres cannot provide all facilities to the devotees and visitors. It is the duty of the local bodies and the Government to provide facilities like good roads, transport and shelters, etc. Being the then Mangalore Diocesan Pastoral Council Secretary for about 6 years from 1986 to 1991, I had raised this issue and had discussions about these points with the authorities and wrote in newspapers also. But not many developments took place.

By the grace of God, Udupi had been formed as a Diocese in 2012 with the eminent personality Most Rev. Dr. Gerald Isaac Lobo as its Founder Bishop. As the entire Karkala taluk is included in Udupi Diocese, naturally Attur Shrine came in its jurisdiction. With this and through Bishop Gerald the way was opened for the progress of Attur Shrine.

Holy Father has approved the prayer of the Udupi Bishop for elevating the shrine Church to the Minor Basilica status. Thereby, our beloved Attur shrine

is being raised to the honour of a Minor Basilica. With this the shrine and the Diocesan authorities gear up for providing day to day spiritual needs as well as developmental activities within its reach. Local panchayat, people's representatives and the government have to put more emphasis in providing more and better facilities to the devotees visiting the Basilica.

With the new status of a Basilica not only devotees but also people with a tourist interest may visit the Shrine from places near and far. To facilitate such flow of people many more facilities need to be arranged in and around the shrine. Among them a few are:

1. Autorickshaw / Taxi services to and from the nearest bus stations.
2. Shops with necessary items and restaurants near the shrine.
3. Apartment hotels/ mess near the shrine for those who wish to stay overnight.

People who know Attur and who are residing far and near may request tour operators to include the Basilica in their tour itinerary. As more and more people visit the Basilica a small township may come up in the long run. Enterprising and common people too can join hands in one way or the other to see this happening.

My wish: Any place can develop by itself and without

much human efforts if there is sanctity in such place. Over 200 years the Attur shrine has developed by itself and fulfilled the needs of devotees from far and near. Now with attaining the Basilica status, the shrine will develop and shine as a great pilgrimage centre. No doubt it will happen.

Source: Daijiworld.com

A memorable moment

Mumbai Archbishop, CCBI and FIBC President Cardinal Oswald Gracias led the Eucharistic Mass and presided over the programme that followed the mass on August 1.

Albert W. D'Souza, the Chairman of ALDEL Education Trust, Chairman and M.D. of Printania Offset Pvt. Ltd., and Chairman of Model Co-operative Bank, Mumbai and his family (wife – Elvira and son – Aldrige Dominic) accompanied the Cardinal.

On their return to Mumbai, H. R. Alva (Former Secretary of the Pastoral Council of the undivided Diocese of Mangalore) and his wife Concepta met the Cardinal and craved his blessings at the Mangalore International Airport at Bajpe. This meeting was made possible by Albert.

Elevated to Minor Basilica, Attur St Lawrence Church has Gripping History

- By John B. Monteiro

Pope Francis has elevated St. Lawrence church at Attur, near Karkala, to the status of a Minor Basilica and the celebrations to mark this were held on August 1, 2016. This constitutes a great landmark in the history of this nomadic church shifting from its original modest, thatched-roofed shelter in the vicinity of the present grand structure. In view of the new focus on this church, it is interesting and relevant to have a passing peep into this nomadic church where hordes of pilgrims and favour-seekers, cutting across religious barriers, throng throughout the year, especially during its annual three-day feast celebration. In this church they vow to, and swear by, the saint of Karkala St. Lawrence.

A certain newly married couple decided to name their first born male child as John Baptist. But, there was no issue for several years. Many decades ago, such predicament was a matter of great anguish for the families involved and subject of furtive talk of the villages. The desperate couple made a vow to St. Lawrence of Karkala and got a male child which was promptly named John Baptist Lawrence. This is an unusual combination. But, Lawrence (Lores, Lorsu) is

one of the most common names in Tulu Nadu, reflecting the influence of St. Lawrence of Karkala in the region. Also, for decades, and even now, disputes were/are settled by elders where swearing by St. Lawrence of Karkala was/is quite common and decisive. Because, one would not swear lightly and risk the wrath of St. Lawrence.

For over 100 years, devotees of St. Lawrence had been going on annual pilgrimage to St. Lawrence's Church at Karkala, from as far away as Mangalore, on foot or by bullock carts, covering a distance of 54 KM. The annual feast of the church, towards the end of January, took the dimensions of a jathra and a great mela congregates at the church during the three-day celebration.

The church is now more precisely called St. Lawrence Church, Attur. But it still has Karkala tag in the minds of devotees at large in Tulu Nadu and beyond. That is because the church has a nomadic past and an unusual Saint as its patron. We will start with the Saint's brief background and trace his movements in the Karkala area till he stayed put at Attur.

Born in the third century AD, Lawrence is supposed to be a

Spaniard who landed in Rome and was mentored by Xystus, who was the Archdeacon, in scriptures and maxims of Christian perfection. When this mentor became the Pope in 257, he appointed Lawrence as Archdeacon, despite being the youngest among seven deacons. He was put in charge of the treasury and assigned to distribute the revenues among the poor. At this juncture, Emperor Valerian published edicts condemning all religious leaders to death. In 258, Pope Xystus was apprehended and marched away to be martyred. As he was being taken away as captive, the Pope instructed Lawrence to distribute all church treasures among the poor of Rome. He hurriedly distributed the entire treasure by seeking out the poor from the lanes and by-lanes of Rome.

The emperor's Prefect (like a Governor) in Rome was set to lay his hands on the Church's famed treasures and asked Lawrence to give an account of them pending forfeiture. Lawrence asked for three day's time to show the treasures. Going all over Rome, he gathered all the poor, beggars and handicapped persons and assembled them in one place. Then, on the third day, he invited the Prefect and, pointing out to the

vast assembly, declared that they were the treasures of the Church. An insulted and enraged Prefect ordered that Lawrence be put to death by burning him, bound with chains, on a gridiron, over live coals. He endured this slow death with peaceful composure and died with a smile on his face. Looking at the scene, seven Senators embraced Christianity and organised Lawrence's burial near the road to Tibur, on August 10, 258. Now the Basilica of St. Lawrence stands over his grave.

The Karkal-Attur Parish is said to have been in existence even before 1759 and the church, a thatched roof structure, was located at a place about 7 KM from the present church. Tippu Sultan of Mysore, during the great captivity of Christians (1784-1799), demolished the church, along with other churches all over Tulu Nadu. On being freed from captivity after the British defeated Tippu, the returned Christians built a church, in 1801, somewhere on the way to Nakre. In 1839, another church was built at a place about 4 KM from the earlier church. This was situated behind the present church and faced west.

How the church came to be established on this spot has an interesting story. As the church on the way to Nakre was too old to be used, the devotees of St. Lawrence, led by a Goan priest, went in search of a suitable site to build a new church, carrying with them a one-foot wooden

statue of St. Lawrence. They prayed to the saint to guide them in the choice of a place for raising a church in his honour. Coming down the woods of 'Parpal' hills, they reached Attur and halted near a spring flowing at the base of the hill. Having quenched their thirst and after some rest, they were resuming their journey. But, as they went to pick up the statue of St. Lawrence, it wouldn't come off the ground. Realising that the saint would want them to build the church there, they promised to build one. At this point, the statue came off the ground and the church was built, in 1839, and the rest is history.

The present modern church was built in front of old church which is also being used for worship. The new church is 125 ft.long, 97ft.wide and is suitable for accommodating 2500 devotees. It has an impressive front façade rising to a height of 90ft.



The statue of St Lawrence - also known as the 'Saint of Miracles'



The front view of the shrine of St Lawrence which was proclaimed as the Minor Basilica on August 1, 2016.



Devotees witness the grand celebrations (which were held on the open ground) inside the shrine on a LED screen.



A view of the altar inside the shrine of St Lawrence.



A view of the pushkarini on the shrine premises. The water in the pond is said to have healing powers.

Shrine of 'Saint of Miracles'

gets Minor Basilica status

More than 25,000 devotees witnessed the historic celebrations of the proclamation of the shrine of St Lawrence as Minor Basilica on August 1. It is the second basilica in Karnataka State and 22nd in India.

Prior to the solemn Eucharistic Mass, Rector of the Shrine, Rev Fr George D'Souza conducted the Novena Service in preparation for the titular feast of St Lawrence which was celebrated on August 10, 2016.

The grand eucharistic celebration commenced at 10 am with the procession of priests, followed by Bishops and Cardinals. Prior to the Mass, Udupi Diocese Bishop Most Rev Dr Gerald Isaac Lobo welcomed Archbishop of Mumbai, His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, the chief celebrant of the Holy Eucharist.

Archbishop Oswald Cardinal Gracias in his introductory remarks said that the elevation of the Shrine of St Lawrence as Minor Basilica is a great honour not only to the Diocese of Udupi, but also for the State of Karnataka and India. He also said that St Lawrence who is regarded as the 'Saint of Miracles' would shower his

blessings on his devotees. His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias began the mass in Konkani.

Prior to the singing of 'Gloria', His Eminence Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandurum and President of CBCI, read the Proclamation Decree in Latin language. Thereafter he handed over the Decree to Rector Rev Fr George D'Souza. The same Decree was read in Konkani by Bishop Most Rev Dr Gerald Isaac Lobo.

Archbishop of Bengaluru Most Rev Bernard Moras in his

homily said that the elevation of St Lawrence Shrine to the status of Minor Basilica and the Proclamation and Dedication of the same is an historic and spiritual event and conveyed his compliments to the devotees of Karkala and the Diocese of Udupi. Archbishop Bernard Moras traced the evolution of Basilicas in Rome from the time of Emperor Constantine. He further said that there are 1740 Minor Basilicas in the world out of which 22 are in India including the newly proclaimed St Lawrence Minor Basilica at Attur-Karkala. He also explained the nature and



His Eminence Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandurum, and CBCI President, addressing a gathering after proclaiming the shrine of St Lawrence as Minor Basilica in Karkal on August 1, 2016 Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and priests look on.

characteristics of Minor Basilica and the privileges and conditions associated with a Minor Basilica.

Archbishop Bernard Moras narrated in brief the life and martyrdom of St Lawrence and pointed out that the martyr lived according to the main theme of the Gospel of the day, that is, a grain of wheat will yield in abundance if it falls in the soil and dies.

There was exemplary discipline and devotion during the entire Eucharistic celebration. Over 15,000 devotees participated in the Holy Mass. Nearly 200 priests and 15 Bishops along with three Cardinals concelebrated the Holy Eucharist.

Devotees had started arriving at the Shrine right from the early morning from different corners of the twin dioceses. Different parishes had made their own arrangements to come to the Shrine hiring private buses. Many travelled by their own vehicles with family members, while others hired private vehicles and many more by public transport. The huge pandal with seating arrangement for 12,000 devotees was gradually filled up by 9.30 am. By the time the Holy Mass started, more than 15,000 devotees thronged the venue many of them finding place inside both old and new churches and still more standing by the side of the pandal.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of coastal region, three cardinals, more than a dozen bishops and archbishops came together to celebrate any festival or programme. More than 25,000 devotees had a rare privilege to see so many religious heads on a single stage during the proclamation of shrine of St Lawrence at Attur as a Minor Basilica.

Addressing the huge gathering which was followed by the proclamation, His

he said and appreciated the good work done by Udupi diocese Bishop Dr Gerald Isaac Lobo. On behalf of the Conference of Bishops of India, he congratulated the Bishop and people of Udupi Diocese for the Proclamation and Dedication of St Lawrence Minor Basilica.

The Papal Flag was unveiled by Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Catholic Church, Ernakulam, His Eminence Mar George Cardinal Alencherry. Speaking on the occasion, he



A large number of priests, nuns and devotees take part in the celebrations.

Eminence Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandurum and President of CBCI, thanked the Almighty God for granting the privilege of St Lawrence Shrine being elevated to the status of Minor Basilica by Pope Francis.

"It is a moment of pride and blessing for not only Karkal and Udupi, but to the entire country,"

said that he had a great desire to visit the Shrine of St Lawrence for a long time and he got an opportunity to participate in the Proclamation and Dedication of St Lawrence Minor Basilica. He further added that the holy sanctuary of St Lawrence may become an all-India sanctuary to which devotees from different parts of India may visit this Minor Basilica.

Archbishop of Bengaluru Bernard Moras read out the special message from Pope Francis on the occasion of the Proclamation and Dedication of St Lawrence Minor Basilica. On behalf of the Karnataka Bishops Council, Archbishop Bernard Moras congratulated Bishop Gerald Lobo and people of the Diocese of Udupi.

Mangaluru diocese Bishop Rev Dr Aloysius Paul D'Souza read the message from the Apostolic Nuncio, Rev Dr Salvatore Penacchio. The chalice sent by the Apostolic Nuncio for this occasion was handed over by Bishop Aloysius D'Souza to the Rector of the Basilica, Rev Fr George D'Souza.

Archbishop of Mumbai His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias in his message said that it was a great joy to attend the occasion. Referring to the Pope, Cardinal Gracias said that Pope Francis has declared this year as the Year of Mercy and Compassion, so was St Lawrence. He prayed that the devotion of St Lawrence would spread more and more.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Udupi district-in-charge Minister Pramodh Madhwaraj said that the pilgrimage center of Attur-Karkala has been attracting devotees from all religions and from different regions. He expressed his happiness on the Proclamation and Declaration of

the Shrine as the Minor Basilica. This is the proud moment for the entire Udupi district and Karnataka State. He further said that the Minor Basilica of St Lawrence at Attur-Karkala would be an example of communal harmony for the entire country.

Karkala MLA Sunil Kumar said that the Shrine of St Lawrence falling in his constituency has been a center of pilgrimage and by its Proclamation and Dedication as the Minor Basilica, Karkala has come to be known throughout the country and the world. He further said that he is proud to know that out of 22 Minor Basilicas in India one of them is situated in his constituency.

He assured full cooperation with the authorities of the Minor Basilica for providing various facilities to the devotees who would be visiting the pilgrimage center.

Archbishop Anil Couto from Delhi Archdiocese, Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao from Goa Archdiocese, Bishop of Ajmer, Bishop Pius D'Souza, Bishop Ignatius D'Souza from Bareilly, Bishop Saldore Lobo from Bareeipur, Bishop Gerald Almeida from Jabalpur, Bishop Alex Vadakumthala from Kannur, Bishop Gerald Mathias from Lucknow among others were present.

Courtesy: Dr. Ronald Anil Fernandes, Bureau Chief of 'Deccan Herald', Mangalore.

Humour

A little girl comes back home from school and tells her mom:

"Mommy, today I got punished for something I didn't even do!"

"What?! What do you mean?" Her mother says, angry, "I'm going to call your teacher right now! What is it you didn't do?"

"My homework."

* * *

A rich businessman walks down the street when he spots an old man sitting with a fishing rod next to a puddle, trying to fish.

The businessman takes pity on the old deranged man, and invites him to lunch at the coffee shop close by.

After the meal, the businessman asks him with a smile:

"So? Did you catch any fish today?"

"Sure did," answers the old man, "You're my third one."

Year of Jubilees of Ever-smiling ‘Peoples Bishop’

- Dr. Aloysius Paul D’Souza

- H. R. Alva

Year 2016. Triple celebrations for Most Rev. Dr. Aloysius Paul D’Souza, Bishop of Mangalore. On 15th May he completed 20 years as Bishop shepherding the Diocese of Mangalore. On 21st June his Platinum Birthday and coming 3rd December his Golden Ordination of Priesthood.

I have observed Bishop Aloysius from close quarters for many years. I was closely associated with Fr. Aloysius Paul D’Souza or fondly called ‘Fr. AP or Fr. Luvi’ by the people. He was in the Bishop’s House most of the time and myself too was visiting frequently in connection with different activities. Even after Fr. AP’s elevation as Bishop I was visiting him on many occasions and wrote letters often appreciating his deeds or for some other reasons. Though I sent such letters as typed or printed he would quickly reply in his unique hand writing. Having such an acquaintance with the

Bishop, it’s a small attempt to narrate his special qualities along with his achievements in this write-up.

Early life of the Bishop:



Aloysius Paul is the 6th child among 7 children of Mathias D’Souza and Isabella D’Souza, the farmers of Hekkottu, then in Agrar and now in Farla Parish near Bantwal. He studied at

Agrar church school and then in SVS High School, Bantwal. He joined St Joseph Seminary, Jeppu, Mangalore, for priestly studies.

From Father AP to Bishop

AP: Br. Aloysius was ordained by Bp. Basil on 3rd December 1966. His first posting as Assistant Parish priest was at Cordel Church where he served till 1970. During that time he obtained Bachelor’s degree from Karnataka University. I am sure by then Bp. Basil had recognized the talents of this young priest and chose him as his Secretary and Fr. AP served him till mid 1971. In that year Fr. AP was sent to Rome for studies in Canon Law. After over 5 years of study he obtained DCL (Doctorate in Canon Law) and qualified as Advocate in Roman Rota (the highest tribunal of the Church). He was the first priest from India to qualify for that position in the Rota.

After returning from Rome he was appointed as the Chancellor of the Mangalore Diocese in 1976 and served 12 long years along with other positions like Secretary to the Bishop, Judicial Vicar of the Diocesan court, Rector of Gladsome Home which prepares the young students for the Seminary. From 1988 he served as Parish Priest of Cascia Church for 7 years and continued



in the posts of Chancellor and Judicial Vicar.

Till 1995, the administration of St Joseph Seminary, Jeppu was with the Jesuits. The seminary came to the joint management of Mangalore and Calicut Dioceses in 1995. Fr. AP was appointed as the Rector, being the first Mangalore Diocesan Priest elevated to that position.

Bishop Basil who had served the Diocese for over 30 years and made the Diocese progressive in every respect desired to have an Auxiliary Bishop to help him in the Diocesan affairs. Granting the wish of Bp. Basil, Vatican appointed Fr. AP as Auxiliary Bishop of Mangalore on 11-01-1996. Fr. AP's Episcopal ordination was held on 15th May 1996. He adopted the Episcopal Motto, "*With the Compassion of Jesus Christ*"

Bishop Basil was guided by the Holy Spirit in appointing an Auxiliary Bishop and perhaps he was right in his decision. Still in office he passed away on 5th September 1996. Bishop AP was appointed as the Administrator of the Diocese on 13th September and anointed as Bishop of Mangalore by Vatican on 18th December and he assumed office on 27th December 1996.

Mangalore – A leading Diocese in India: Mangalore Diocese has been hailed as 'Rome of the East'. It has dense Catholic population (nearly 3 lakhs). Spirituality and Christian faith are at the peak. It has

provided vocations to the church in India and even abroad. Among Bishops in India over forty are from Mangalore. It has carved a niche in education, health care and social activities. As such many Dioceses in India are looking up to Mangalore for guidance.

Bishop AP was involved and had keenly observed the administration of Bp. Basil for many years as his right hand. After assuming office as the Bishop he toiled hard with ever smiling face to maintain and build the Diocese. He regularly made pastoral visits to the parishes and participated in special occasions.

The Catholics of Mangalore origin are spreading fragrance in many cities of India especially in Mumbai, in the Gulf countries, in Europe, Australia, in the North American region and elsewhere. Bishop AP visited them and took part in their joys and sorrows.

Qualities of the Bishop: Bishop AP is a good orator. His talks and sermons have the capacity to attract people. Most of the time he is busy either at his office, or in parishes, institutions or on tour. He likes meeting people and talking to them.

Bishop AP is a simple person. He has concern towards his people. His motive is that in the

Diocese no child should be deprived of education due to poverty. He has upgraded the existing institutions and established many more for higher education. Worth naming among them here are Fr. Muller Medical College and St Joseph Engineering College which are quite popular in Karnataka today. 'Educational Funds' or scholarships have been established to help the needy students. The progress achieved of Fr. Muller Hospital and Institutions is tremendous



including the Hospital's extension at Thumbe, Bantwal. Bishop has established a 'Diocesan Medical Relief Fund' to help the poor and needy patients. To help the people many a social welfare schemes including self help groups and micro finance groups have been started.

Love towards Konkani: Bishop AP is a staunch lover of mother tongue Konkani. Konkani is the official language in religious services. Moreover the Diocese has been publishing periodicals,

books and encouraging Konkani activities. Konkani has been taught as one of the optional languages in Schools and Colleges under the Diocese. Here I would like to narrate an incident towards the Bishop's love for Konkani. One of the Diocesan laity organizations had arranged a programme in English to honour the achievers. Bishop presided over the programme. When his turn came the Bishop spoke in Konkani saying that Konkani is our identity.

Social Concern: Bishop is cordial towards other denominations of Christianity and other religions. Whenever there is an occasion he participates in programmes related to communal

harmony, public celebrations of Christmas, Deepavali, Eid etc.

Bishop has shown keen interest in Government programmes such as AIDS prevention, Clean India etc. He has encouraged people's programmes like agitation on water shortage etc. Bishop is keen in meeting people's representatives and other dignitaries without considering party, religion, etc. A cordial welcome is always extended to anyone who wants to meet him.

The long cherished dream of the formation of Udupi Diocese was fulfilled on Bishop AP's initiative. He has joined hands with "Mangalore-Africa Mission" in Same, Tanzania.

During his tenure he led the diocese with boldness and courage. In this connection I can cite the incident of attacks on churches in 2008.

Long live the Bishop: Bishop AP works many hours a day without tiredness. Due to this heavy workload he has fallen ill some times and even in such situations he attended pre-determined engagements. On the occasion of jubilees of Bishop AP, I pray to God Almighty to grant him good health and happiness for many more years to come.

This article and related photos are courtesy of Daijiworld.com

Pope on Islamic Violence

"I do not believe it is right to identify Islam with violence," the Pope told journalists during the July 31 papal flight to Rome following his apostolic journey to Poland. "This is not right and it is not true." "I don't like to speak about Islamic violence," the Pope said, taking into account that one sees violence every day in the newspapers, even at the hands of baptised Catholics. "There are violent Catholics!" he said. "If I speak of Islamic violence, I must speak of Catholic violence." The Pope expressed his belief that every religion has its fundamentalist groups, including Catholicism. Such fundamentalism, when it is present, can "kill with language,"

he said, citing the words of the Apostle James.

Francis' remarks came in response to a question put by a journalist regarding the murder of a French priest at the hands of Islamist militants, an attack which Pope Francis condemned. The journalist asked the Pope why he never refers to Islam when decrying these sorts of terrorist acts committed by Islamist militants.

During the in-flight conference, Pope Francis explained he had a long discussion with the Al-Azhar University's grand imam, and so understands Muslims. "They seek peace, encounter," he explained. Moreover, he said that according

to the nuncio to an African nation, many of those who pass through the Jubilee Year of Mercy Door, who go to pray at the altar of Our Lady, are Muslims who wish to take part in the Jubilee. Francis also recalled the Muslims he encountered during last November's trip to the Central African Republic, including the imam who at one point joined him in the popemobile.

Acknowledging that there are fundamentalist groups, the Pope stressed that there are many young people, including Europeans themselves, who "have left empty of ideals, who have no work," and who turn to drugs and alcohol and "enlist in fundamentalist groups."

Catholic Marriage Tribunal Annulments – The Great Misunderstanding

- By Don Aguiar

A few weeks ago many may have read in the newspapers that the Supreme Court had observed that divorce decrees which are actually annulment decrees granted by the ecclesiastical tribunals, commonly called Church Courts, have no legal sanctity and are not recognized and invalid and hence one will require going in for a civil divorce should one want to remarry.

Many people - even our Indian courts - seem to misunderstand annulment given by Catholic Marriage Tribunals. Truth be told, they do think of it as a sort of “Catholic Divorce.”

Annulments and divorces are two distinct things and a clarification between them would be in order before proceeding further.

An annulment (formally known as a “declaration of nullity”) is a ruling that a particular marriage was null from the beginning—that is, something was gravely wrong at the time the wedding vows were made and it prevented a valid marriage from coming into existence.

A “Declaration of Nullity” is not the dissolution of an existing marriage as is a dispensation from a marriage (*ratum sed non consummatum* and an

“annulment” in civil law), but rather a determination that consent was never validly exchanged due to a failure to meet the requirements to enter validly into matrimony and thus a marriage never existed

This is different from a divorce, which proposes to

The Catholic Church never permitted divorce because Christ himself forbade it:

“To sum up, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul alike testify that Jesus Christ taught the absolute indissolubility of marriage: that He forbade divorce under any



dissolve a marriage that is in existence.

Jesus Christ expressly taught that if two people divorce and then remarry, they are committing the grave sin of adultery. He taught: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (Mark 10:11-12).

circumstances...” (Christian Marriage by Fr. Joyce, S.J., 1948 P302)

According to the teachings of Christ, a married couple can never be divorced:

“The people therefore must be zealously taught that a marriage rightly entered upon cannot be dissolved; for those joined in matrimony God has ordained a perpetual companionship for life and a

knot of necessity which cannot be loosed except by death.” (Mirari Vos, Gregory XVI, 1832)

Because of this teaching, the Church cannot simply give divorced people permission to remarry. To do so would be to give them permission to commit adultery.

Divorce says that you were once married, but now you aren't. Divorce is a matter of Civil law.

Annulment says you were never truly married in the first place. Something necessary for a valid marriage was missing. Annulment is a matter of Church law.

Catholic annulment means that a couple was never married in the sacramental sense. God did not create that unbreakable bond between them because the sacrament of marriage was not actually fulfilled.

An annulment can't erase history, and doesn't try to. An annulment in the Catholic Church deals only with the sacrament of marriage, and not the legal, historical, emotional truth of marriage. An annulment states that the sacrament was never present in the marriage, and not that the marriage never took place. It is a myth that an annulment means that the marriage never happened.

The term “annulment” is actually a little misleading. It sounds like the Church is actively cancelling, or nullifying, the

marriage. The proper term for Catholic annulment is “declaration of nullity”: the Church declares that the marriage never was valid in the first place. This becomes clearer when we compare Catholic annulment to civil divorce.

A divorce is effective as of the date of the divorce decree. Before that, the couple was still married.

A declaration of nullity affects the period of time starting from the original date of the wedding ceremony. The couple was never married.

A divorce is the dissolving of a lawful civil marriage by the state. The granting of a divorce, in and of itself, is an acknowledgment that there was a marriage in the first place from which a divorce could be granted.

An annulment, however, is not the dissolving of a marriage at all, rather it is a ruling from the Church that there was never a marriage in the first place, i.e., some impediment(s) prevented the marriage from ever taking place – it never happened. The putative married couples were simply cohabitating the whole while and the annulled couples are free to marry “for the first time” if they so choose.

- Civil divorce and a Church annulment are two vastly different things.
- A divorce is concerned with the legal realities of marriage only.

- An annulment is concerned with the religious and spiritual element—the sacrament of marriage.
- A divorce focuses on the end of a marriage.
- An annulment looks at the beginning, the very moment the couple said “I do.”
- A divorce looks at marriage in civil law.
- An annulment looks at marriage from the perspective of the Gospel and of Church doctrine.
- It is a myth that an annulment is “Divorce, Catholic style” as the Church does not recognize divorce. It only grants annulments.

Those who have their marriages annulled in Church can remarry in Church but legally their second marriage is not valid. After an annulment, civil effects like alimony, division of property, custody of children, etc., are not decided by the Church. These must be decided by a civil court and therefore a civil divorce is necessary. Judges of the Catholic Marriage Tribunal are not officers of the law.

A declaration of nullity made by the Catholic Church is distinct from a civil divorce. A civil divorce may serve as proof for the ecclesiastical tribunal that the marriage community cannot be rebuilt.

Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI were worried

about the ease with which annulments are granted by courts, especially when premised on ill-defined grounds such as “immaturity or psychic weakness” or “psychic immaturity”, an expression of concern that the term, “annulment” is being treated as synonymous with “divorce”.

For Pope Francis, after Cardinal Quarracino expressed worries over the fact that probably “half of all marriages are null” in the light of canon law, was one of the reasons for calling an extraordinary synod of bishops on the family in October 2014. Pope Francis later reformed the matrimonial nullity trial process in 2015.

How is it that for over 1900 years Catholic couples, many of whom were totally illiterate, were nearly 100% successful in contracting marriages, and now only about 5% of them can pull it off? Are we now to infer that in the last 50 years Catholic couples got really stupid? So stupid, in fact, that they can no longer execute a simple marriage contract? These and other troubling questions naturally arise when one considers the situation prevailing around.

Why hasn't the modern Catholic Church taken any corrective measures? If the reason given by the Church is indeed correct, i.e., 99.6% of invalid marriages are due to a defect of intention, then why

haven't they corrected this after 54 plus years? Why don't they spend 30 minutes to an hour on giving instructions to would-be married couples about the necessary intention for the sacrament of matrimony? There's nothing complicated about this. In fact, you could probably do it in 5 minutes. Wouldn't doing this be a lot simpler, cheaper and kinder than forcing couples to go through the time-consuming and stress-laden process of obtaining an annulment? What about all of the families that the modern Catholic Church is damaging due to their lack of care in giving proper marriage instructions in the first place? Don't they count for anything? Don't the children of these “non-married” couples matter?

If 95% of all marriage cases brought before Church tribunals were determined to have been invalid due to defects of consent, then can't we also conclude that this defect of consent is probably present in all other marriages performed by the Church as well? Why would one believe that defect of consent is only to be found in those married couples seeking annulments? Wouldn't it, by extension, also apply to all marriages in the Church? After all, don't they all get the same basic marriage instructions and go through the same prenuptial preparations?

Can you imagine returning a defective item to a retail store, and instead of refunding you your original purchase price, they keep that money and add a further charge for accepting the return? Absurd? Yes it is. But this is essentially what the modern Catholic Church does to its parishioners who petition for annulments. Couples spend thousands of rupees on weddings only to later find out that due to a defect of consent, there was never a marriage at all. Since this “defect of consent” is not the fault of the couples, but of the Church who failed to properly instruct them, does the Church return any monies received for the performance of these “non-weddings”? No, they don't. And to add insult to injury, they have the audacity to charge these poor couples for a piece of paper saying that they were never married in the first place. It is surprising that someone hasn't made them answer for their misconduct. It is the ultimate in duplicity. And more egregiously, it is the ultimate in careless disregard to those whom they proclaim to be their spiritual children.

But the fact remains that after 54 plus years of a high percentage failure in conferring the sacrament of matrimony, they (the modern Catholic Church) haven't done a thing - ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. Why is that?

You Wish To Do Something. If Not Now, When?

- By Marguerite Theophil

So many of us spend a ridiculous amount of time just worrying about how terrible things are in the world these days. If only we could convert that vast amount of worry into action!

To be fair, many are not quite sure what they can do, others feel that their small efforts won't amount to much — though 'small efforts' are still way ahead of doing nothing. There are others who declare: I'll do this or that 'when I retire'. Really? While there are numerous older people who actively engage in activities for the larger good, most of them began in 'small' ways when they were a lot younger.

A great idea from people with passion is catching on. There are many of them that I know, but two now come to mind: From a simple idea, noticing vast amounts of cloth and other materials lying unused in India's urban households, while many rural poor die because they do not have enough clothing, Anshu Gupta founded an NGO which is now a movement working in twenty-one states.

Through its staff, volunteers, and partner organisations, it redistributes contributed items, and processes materials into essential articles like rugs, blankets, mattresses - and most

touchingly - cloth sanitary pads, as a hygienic alternative to the unclean rags that less privileged girls and women often are forced to use.

Rushab Turakhia spearheads a movement to not just spread kindness but make it a way of life. The idea is that when you do an act of kindness, instead of accepting a simple 'thank you' you give the person a YTN card ('your turn now'), encouraging that person to pass on the kindness to someone else in need. A simple idea, but one that has spread to over 32 countries.

Genuine service should dissolve the notion of doing good for only 'people like us'. Our proclaimed inclusivity is most nobly expressed when we reach out to those we tend to label as the 'other'.

Hundreds of impoverished Palestinian herders and farmers living in caves and tents in a remote area of the Palestinian West Bank, denied basic amenities by the government, have been provided free electricity due to the ingenuity of two Israeli physicists, Elad Orian and Noam Dotan, both pro-peace activists who, despite obstacles and opposition, have installed a high-grid wind and solar system free of charge for them.

We have read, heard and believed that apathy is really the more destructive force; more terrible at times than outright hate. To believe something is wrong and do nothing about it is considered in many traditions a 'sin' or something that goes against the higher teachings.

As Hillel, renowned Judaic sage and scholar, urges us in this powerful message: "If I am not for myself who is for me? And, being only for my own self, what am 'I'?" And then, significantly: "And if not now, when?"

Whatever age we are, there is much we can do, either starting something on our own or supporting the work of others. There are no real valid excuses to side-step this – I read of a paraplegic man helping at-risk youth in his community, who said that he was formerly able to do 1,000 things. Now he can do 50. So his focus is on the 50 things he can do, not on the things he cannot.

Mumbai-based, a Ph.D., the author, a frequent contributor to the Speaking Tree, TOI, is an organisational consultant for business and educational institutions.

Thanks to Source: The Speaking Tree – The Times of India (4/8/'16)

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Short-circuits and Communal Violence in India

- By Dr John Dayal

The Christian leadership in India should perhaps hire better electrical engineers, instead of going screaming to the national media and international forums about increasing persecution of the community in the country. The Delhi police says fires in two Delhi churches were caused by short circuits. The desecration of statues in two churches were petty vandalism, while two others were mere thefts. Nothing communal or targetted about the six cases in the national capital.

In one of the cases where a Grotto in a Catholic church was vandalised, the police arrested three inebriated Sikh young men whose images had been apparently recorded in the closed circuit TV camera.

Elsewhere in the country, a love-lorn Muslim rickshaw puller was arrested for decapitating a statue of Jesus and tying the statue of Mary with a dog chain in Agra. And for the rape of a 72 year old Nun in Bengal, police arrested Muslim men said to be illegal migrants from Bangladesh who were apprehended as far away as Ludhiana in Punjab and Bangladesh. This must be one of those coincidences.

The Delhi Police Commissioner, Mr. B S Bassi, has apparently sent a long confidential report to the Ministry of Home Affairs which somewhere got leaked as

“exclusives” to every news channel. It is a coincidence that the Bassi Report comes within hours of the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom publishing its annual report for 2014, in which it puts India in the list of Tier Two countries under watch for religious freedom transgressions. Neighbour Pakistan, if it is any consolidation, is a Tier 1 country together with some theocracies and dictatorships.

The police commissioner had said much the same two months ago when he was summoned by the Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi. And indeed, the Union Home Minister, Mr. Rajnath Singh, had done so even earlier, talking to a group that had been beaten up and detained by the police on the eve of the state elections in Delhi. And two months before that, Mr. Modi had told a delegation led by an Archbishop which had come to greet him on the eve of Christmas that Christians were exaggerating this, “making mountains out of molehills,” as he colourfully put it, and their actions would impact the government’s development agenda.

To substantiate that there was nothing religious about such crimes, Mr Bassi had earlier produced statistics to show that 206 temples, 30 gurdwaras, 14 mosques and three churches were

burgled in 2014. This would be some contribution to interfaith dialogue on security issues. Far be it from me to call it an attempted white-wash.

There is no clarification by the commissioner, or by the government, on communal and targetted violence against Muslims, though also it figures in the US report. But that could possibly be because of a presumption in government and political circles that the US, with all too many resident Islamophobes, is bothered just about the Christian community which, to quote (then) Chief Justice Dattu, gets so much money from the West.

But persecution is not about the desecration of a church, or the smashing of a Marian statue. It takes many forms. Churches are not burnt in China, but there is fear in the community. Though not as it may be in some Islamic countries where violent death is always a breath away. Bhutan, with its quotient of happiness, is also as intolerant as the Maldives when it comes to “alien” faiths though no one has been killed. India records from 150 to 250 cases of some form of violence against Christians every year.

It has always been, everywhere, about defining the other. But in popular, even academic and parliamentary discourse, Indians are talking of

“Indic religions” and “Semitic” religions, holding Baba Saheb Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism with about 500,000 of his followers has nothing out of the ordinary, but every tribal’s voluntary change of faith a crime that can put him in jail, together with anyone else caught with a Bible. A dozen or so Christians, including one pastor, and a baby of less than a year, spent Christmas 2014 in a Madhya Pradesh police lockup on the demand of the local political leaders. Madhya Pradesh has a so-called “Freedom of Religion” Act. But this routinely also happens in states which do not have such a statute. In Chhatisgarh, several

villages have passed resolutions banning the entry of religious persons from any community other than Hindus.

Mr. Modi’s government says there was violence against Christians even during the government of the United Progressive Alliance, chaired by a person of Italian Catholic descent, with a Sikh as prime minister.

How does that minimise the undercurrents of communalism and hatred that are, unfortunately, such a deep part of the landscape, and escalating with each passing year? Governments have come and gone, and even the Congress has a strong section that says the party should not be seen as

“appeasing” or being sympathetic to Christians and Muslims.

But the common factor is the pungent hatred spewed by the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh and the organisations that are collected in its Sangh parivar. Mr. Modi has said everyone should feel safe in the country; but not once has he named the Sangh. Perhaps he cannot. Many of the hate mongers are in his party in Parliament. At least two are in his Council of Ministers. It is difficult to believe that they do not have his permission, or at least his indulgence.

(This entry was posted on the author’s website on December 20, 2015)

Women Deacons in the Offing?

- By Ann Schneible

Vatican City, Aug 2, 2016: Pope Francis has instituted a new commission for the study of women deacons, the Vatican announced. The decision comes several months after a papal audience with a group of religious sisters, during which Pope expressed his willingness to consider forming a commission to study women deacons, such as they existed in the early Church. According to the Aug. 2 press release, the pontiff came to the decision after a period of “intense prayer and mature reflection.”

The new commission will be headed by Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, who will lead a group comprised of twelve members, half of whom are women.

The Vatican statement mentioned the May 12 papal audience with members of the International Union of Superiors General, during which the question of women deacons was raised during a Q&A session. At the audience, one sister asked why the Church does not include women in the permanent diaconate. The sister had referred to an ancient tradition in the Church in which there were female deacons (albeit not-ordained), and suggested that a commission be established to study the possibility.

Reports quickly circulated following the event that Pope Francis was paving the way for the ordination of women deacons, and potentially even women priests. Holy See then press office director, Fr. Federico Lombardi clarified in a May 13 statement

that the Pope had no such intention.

During an in-flight press conference after his trip to Armenia last June, the Pope spoke of cases in the early Church where women were given similar roles to deacons. For instance, women would be employed to baptize other women for the sake of modesty, since at that time the practice involved full immersion.

The subject of women deacons has previously been studied by the Church, including a 2002 document from the International Theological Commission, an advisory body to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Pope Francis further told journalists during the June 26 press briefing there was no change in the works to allow for the ordination of women to the diaconate.

Marriages are made in Heaven.

- By Hycinth Sophia Alphonse

Marriages are made in Heaven. All Christians believe this. Even before we are born God has selected our better half. It is meaningless to say “this was not my mate; something has gone wrong somewhere”. I have seen many marriages break up for no valid reasons. This trend is increasing apprehensively in modern times.

Why do we forget the sacred vow we take on our marriage day? “I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.” Does it have no sanctity? Or do we just say it without understanding the depth of it? I believe these words have great power in them.

Like communion, marriage is a divine institution. Christian marriage has certain commitments, obligations and duties which are symbolic. The roles which God have given to a Christian husband and wife are not culturally derived, nor are they arbitrarily based. They are intended to symbolize and represent a greater, more fundamental reality. While marriage is temporal, the reality which it symbolizes is eternal. We cannot understand the importance of the duties of the husband or the wife without grasping the reality which

Christian marriage is to symbolically communicate. This fundamental reality which underlies and explains the attitudes and conduct of a man and his wife in marriage is the relationship of Jesus Christ to His Church.

The first miracle of Jesus Christ at Cana has great significance. What does it tell us? Let us analyze; it is a known fact the infatuation and attraction that exists during the early days of marriage, or the honeymoon days, are momentary. Then how does married life prolong? This is where the significance of the Miracle of Cana becomes meaningful.

In the Gospel of St. John 2: 7-10 we read thus:

Jesus said to them, “Fill the water pots with water.” So they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it to him. When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves

the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.”

The headwaiter complains that the latter wine is better than the wine served first. Which is the wine served first? Man-made wine, which exhausts quickly. But when your life wine is prepared by God it is eternal and tastier. In every Christian family we have Jesus as our Head and Mother Mary to intercede for us. This explains the success of a ‘true’ Christian family.

Here is a true life story to illustrate this.

My son is a medical graduate from St. John’s Medical College, Bangalore. He belongs to the class of 2005. He had a classmate, Dr. Basanth Paul, who hails from a lower middle class family. His father is a painter and his mother a patient of chronic kidney disorder. When Basanth was four years old, his mother was diagnosed of kidney disorder. From then she was bedridden, incapable of any activities on her own. In between, this family had to find resource for dialysis regularly. In short, she was just a vegetable. What amazed me was the love and concern the husband had for his wife all these years. A lion portion of his meagre income was spent for

her. I have never heard Basanth or anyone in the family complaining of this. They were concerned only about her life. Basanth's father could not go to far off places for work since his wife needed his attention. This again restricted him from going to new pastures. The family went on smoothly even in these adverse conditions, since they were drinking the wine prepared by Jesus.

After 17 years of suffering she breathed her last in 2010. At that time I was at St. John's Medical College and witnessed

the heartbreaking scene. It was not a sense of relief I saw in those faces but a sense of some irreparable loss. Sincere tears rolled down the eyes of Basanth, his dad and his brother. This incident made me understand the true meaning of: "I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life." Here I saw a true Christian husband, who believed that God had given him this wife and hence it was his duty to be with her, faithfully, till death separates

them. God blessed them abundantly. The two sons are Medical doctors and Basanth's father is living a contented life with his sons and their families.

Let this be an eye opener for us. Christian families are made in heaven and hence it is solemn. Let us pray to be served with the divine wine throughout our lives and place Jesus and mother Mary at the helm of our families.

Dr. Hycinth Sophia Alphonse, M.A., M.Ed., M.Phil (Edn.), M.Phil. (English), Ph.D., Vice Principal (Fatima Mata National College, Kollam).

Report of the Kerala State Committee

- Alphonse Perera

The Kerala State Committee consists of three rites. The State Committee held 12 meetings at Kollam, Thiruvalla and Ernakulam. The last meeting was held on August 2, 2016 at Kollam. The State Committee consists of nine members from three rites (Latin, Syro Malabar and Malankara).

The State Committee has conducted various programmes in the various dioceses of Kerala, with a view to promote Christian values among lay people. It was aimed at promoting the upliftment of underprivileged. Programmes include medical camps, career guidance, psychological counseling, etc.

The committee has decided to register at least 15 life members and 5 benefactors from each diocese.

The attendance in the working committee had been thin for the

last few meetings. This discrepancy shall be corrected. Steps have been taken by the executive members to rope in all the members to the working committee meetings. We are optimistic that all will attend the AGM to be held at Kokatta.

In the State Meeting the Chair discussed the assassination of Fr Jacques Hamel during the Holy Mass in Hostage Siege on a French Church. The Committee expressed pain and horror at the terrorist attack, in which the village priest Fr Jacques Hamel was killed and three others injured.

Protest and pain was expressed by the committee against the torture and discrimination towards the Christians in different parts of India.

AICU Committee of Punalur diocese will be conducting a

medical camp at Little Flower Hospital, Vilakudy, on 21 August 2016 for detecting heart diseases and life style associated diseases.

AICU in association with Fisherman Community Development Programme of St. Stephen's Church will be conducting a Health Seminar and awareness class for the inhabitants of the coastal area.

A career guidance and leadership camp was held by the Mavelikara diocese on 13 August 2016 at Amballamukku.

AICU has been a catalyst in initiating awareness in the Christian community. It has come to the forefront of social activities and proved its strength and made known its presence. We pray that the Almighty God will guide us forward in our further activities and help us to be a support for Christian community in India.

Formation of Catholic Association in Diocese of Jalandhar

At the initiative and invitation of Most Rev. Franco Mulakkal, Bishop of Jalandhar, the Delhi team of All India Catholic Union consisting of Mr. A. Chinnappan, National Secretary and Asst. Secretary General, Mrs Mini John, National Secretary, Mr. Jenis Francis, State President - Delhi and Mr M.S.Stanislaus, State Secretary, Delhi made a comprehensive presentation at the meeting of the Laity Commission of Jalandhar Diocese held at Jalandhar on 6th February 2016. The presentation covered aims, objectives and the activities of Catholic Associations (CA) and the general pictorisation of socio-political activities carried out at Delhi by FCAAD.

After a group discussion on the need and importance of CA in the Diocese, Bishop Franco drew an instant and committed plan of action at the meeting valuing our presence and the empowerment of lay faithful of



the Diocese. He exhorted the faithful to form Catholic Association in the parishes of Jalandhar Diocese followed by Diocesan level CA after four weeks. The approach adopted by the vibrant Bishop pinpointing the need for networking to carry out socio-political activities was unanimously accepted by the members of the Laity Commission.

After forming Catholic Association in parishes, a meeting attended by AICU Team from Delhi consisting of Mr. A. Chinnappan, National

Secretary and Mr. Antony Cruz, Member, FCAAD was held in Jalandhar on 16th April, 2016. Representatives from various parishes, after conducting elections in their respective parishes, and also many of new members participated in the first Annual General Meeting held at Gole Grija Auditorium, Chogetti, Jalandhar. During the AGM, presentation was given once again since lot of new members were present.

At the AGM, the election for new Office Bearers of Catholic Association of Jalandhar was conducted by the AICU Team. Mr. A. Chinnappan, AICU introduced Mr. Tarsen Sahota, President and Mr. Yusuf Azad, Secretary General of CAJ who had attended the Working Committee meeting of AICU held in Mumbai on 28 & 29 May 2016 and the Committee approved the affiliation of Catholic Association of Jalandhar with the All India Catholic Union.



3rd AGM of Udupi Catholic Sabha Pradesh



The 3rd AGM of Udupi Catholic Sabha Pradesh was held at St Mary's English Medium School Complex at Kanarpady, Udupi. Very Rev Fr Baptist Menezes, Vicar General of Udupi Diocese inaugurated event.

He said: "Catholic Sabha Udupi has contributed laudable service for welfare and Development of the social and economic aspects of the people of Diocese of Udupi."

Presided over by the CEC President 2015-16, Sri William Machado, the Office Bearers and Past presidents of the Udupi, all the office Bearers and Past presidents were present.

Members of the Catholic Community who have been elected to Taluk and Zilla Pachayat were felicitated. Sri Wilson Rodrigues, ZP Udupi, Srimathi Violet Baretto, member of Udupi Tauk Panchayat, Michael Ramesh Dsouza, Member Udupi Taluk Panchayat, Sri Melwin Dsouza-By election Grama Panchayat Shirva, Srimathi Renitha Preema Dsouza-by election Grama Panchayath Moodbelle.



Outstanding Performers were felicitated:

University Volley Ball Player Glevan Dsouza-Padukone, Royston Vijay Castelbino-Engineering Models, and Smt Diana Rodrigues-Memner of



Prime Ministers 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities-District Review Committee

Late Francis Dante(Past President of Catholic Sabha Mangalore Pradesh) Memorial, Karnataka State Level Literary Award, was Presented to Rev Fr Richard Menezes OCD Bangalore, for



his Book in Kannada on the life of the Parents of St Theresa, of Little Flower Of Jesus

The Chief Guest of the day, Sri Ronald Dsouza, NRI Businessman, Native of Moodubelle, spoke about the Positive Role of leaders to strengthen the Catholic Sabha -Laity Organisation.

Religions Encourage Followers to be Organ Donors



Misplaced religious belief is probably the single biggest hurdle medical social workers encounter in hospital corridors while convincing families to donate the organs of their dear ones. Very often, the refusals are based on the perception that their religions don't sanction such act.

To dispel such myths that come in the way of saving precious life, heads of all prominent religions came together recently at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Andheri, Mumbai. The message was loud and clear: almost no faith in the world speaks against the act of donating organs or entire bodies when it involves saving a life.

Despite at least two decades of advocacy, organ donation has remained a nascent concept in India. It is estimated that about

1-2 lakh people need kidney transplants every year of which only 5,000 actually get an organ. The numbers are further skewed when it comes to liver transplants and cadaveric organs. The primary reason, believes founder of Vedanta Vision, Jaya Row, lies in the fact that most people during their lifetime do not cultivate the attitude of giving. "All religions of the world talk about giving, but nobody does," she said.

Row said a deeper understanding of the relationship of body to the person may be required here. "From the Vedantic standpoint, the physical body is merely a container that houses us or our personality during the lifetime. At the time of death, it has to be given up," she said. She believes India can become a rich nation of donors if people start thinking of their countrymen as their family.

Over the years, technology has played a significant role in spreading awareness about organ donations and the urgent need for people to get onboard. But, it has hardly led to a meaningful change in donor numbers. "It is true that technologically, we are tremendously advanced but has human consciousness truly evolved? Do we understand that living becomes worthwhile if we learn the art of giving," said Swami Sukhabodhananda, Chairman of Prasanna Trust, evoking a strong response from the audience.

Talking about myths, Yogacharya Surakshit Goswami said people believe in baseless things, such as, if someone has donated eyes, he/she will be blind in their next birth. "So what about those who donate heart and kidneys? They cannot be born without vital organs," he said urging people to think logically.

The event, co-organized by the Times of India, ahead of the Organ Donation Day observed on August 13, also saw participation from the Muslim and Jew communities.

Irfan Engineer, director of Centre for Study of Society and

Secularism, said that Islam has been an ardent believer in organ donation provided three conditions were met. "Organ donation is permitted as long as the gesture saves somebody's life and is an absolute necessity. There should not be any financial aspect to the noble act, and most importantly, it should ensure the well-being of the donor (in case of live donations)," he informed. Representing the Jewish community Shulamith Malekar said that Judaism too considers organ donation as the highest commandment. "It is not only permitted but also encouraged. It is considered one of the biggest sacrifices," she said.

Christianity thinks no differently,

declared Father Stephen Fernandes, a professor of Moral Theology. He emphasised that resurrection does not depend on bodies remaining intact with all organs. "In fact, the conviction of resurrection is consistent with organ donation," he said. He quoted Saint Pope John Paul II who believed that organ donation was a way of nurturing life when performed in an ethically acceptable way. He also cited the example of Pope Benedict XVI who had pledged to donate his organs and even carried the donation card with him.

According to nephrologist Dr Sharad Seth, attached to the Kokilaben Hospital, a more evolved understanding of what

families of organ failure patients endure could help the organ movement. "An entire family gets ruined in the process of dialysis as it is a long-drawn process. The heavy dependence on living donors in the transplant programmes must change," he said. The event closed with a strong appeal from founder of NGO Gift Your Organ Foundation, Sameer Dua, to make organ donation mandatory and not leave it to choice. "When it comes to receiving an organ, there is no religion. Then why should there be one when it comes to donating", he questioned, leaving the audience food for thought.

(Source: The Times of India)

Toxic Behaviors We All Need to Be Aware of & Stay Away From

We are all capable of hurting and upsetting the people around us, especially those we care about. Very often it comes down to how we act with others. What follows are behaviors that will likely push people away from us. Here are toxic behaviors we should all be aware of:

Being envious of others

Don't let envy get the best of you! Your journey is different to that of everybody else's and focusing on the achievements of

others will stop you from seeing all that you have accomplished. Be mindful that your journey is not a competition with others, and the only person that you are competing against is yourself. Each day strive to be the best that you can be and measure your progress (if you want to) with who you were yesterday.

Taking things too personally

Very often, hurt, disappointment and sadness in our lives come from taking things

too personally. When a person believes that everything that happens around them is a direct assault on them, they can be toxic to be around. Bear in mind that what people say and do to you is more about them than it is about you. People react to you through their perspectives, wounds and experiences. Let go of other people's opinions of you and live your life based on your own intuition and wisdom.

Seminar on Empowerment of Lay Faithful in Socio Political Activities of the Church and the Society

Federation of Catholic Associations of the Archdiocese of Delhi (FCAAD) in association with All India Catholic Union (AICU) organized a Seminar on empowerment of the Laity on Saturday, 23rd April 2016 at Yusuf Sadan, New Delhi. Mr. Jenis Francis, President, FCAAD welcomed the members and Mr. A. Chinnappan, National Secretary, AICU and Convenor of the Seminar introduced the moderators.

In his inaugural address, Most Rev. Anil J.T.Couto, Archbishop of Delhi, exhorted the lay leaders to play a major role in the Church and the society to build the body of Christ and work in close coordination with the clergy. Rev. Fr. Susai Sebastian, Vicar General and Spiritual Adviser of FCAAD, called upon the members to get inspired by the three dimensions of spirituality, social and political.



The first session, moderated by Sr. Sneha Gill, dealt with political processes and participation through Civil Services was addressed by Dr. John Dayal and Mr. John Samuel. Rev. Fr. Savari Raj gave inputs on Laity's contribution to the changing Indian Society and Advocate Tehmina Arora brought out the much needed political will to counter atrocities meted out on Minorities in the country.

The second session, moderated by Mr. D.K.

Manavalan, covered laity and collaboration with Christian institutions of health care brought out by Dr. Anuvinda Varkey and Bro. Mani Makunnel detailed the way ahead for collaboration of the laity with the Christian educational institutions. While Rev. Fr. Julius Caesar called upon the leaders to accomplish the mission of the church by networking with NGOs, Dr. Subhash Masters emphasized the need for redefining the evangelization programme and to live and share the faith.

Mr. M.S.Stanislaus, Secretary General, FCAAD, proposed vote of thanks. The seminar concluded with lunch. The Seminar was attended by members of CA Units of FCAAD, Members of ICYM (Youth). Women Council, Women Commission, Laity Commission, Evangelisation Commission, SSVP, DPC and DCRS of the Archdiocese of Delhi.



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