120 chaplains offer spiritual support to athletes during Paris Olympics

"Every morning there will be a moment of lectio divina, of reading and sharing the Gospel, a moment that will be ecumenical," he stated. "And every day we will celebrate the Eucharist, not in the multi-religious center but in the church next to the village."

At the nearby Cathedral of Saint-Denis, a vigil Mass took place in which prayers for a blessing of the athletes and a distribution of Miraculous Medals took place July 25, the night before the opening ceremony. Similarly, the downtown Paris church La Madeleine provides participants and athletes a place of prayer and contemplation throughout the Olympic Games with its special chapel dedicated to "Our Lady of Athletes." Inaugurated in September 2023, this space allows for visitors to light candles, submit prayer intentions, and seek spiritual support.

The cardinal stressed the need for respect towards religious sentiments of believers worldwide," he said in a statement. "The organizers of the Olympics need to address this grave incident with the seriousness it warrants, the current apology issued by the Olympic committee is extremely distasteful. The Vatican in its condemnation and for a poor and those who have lost their jobs. Pope’s August prayer intention

We pray that political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and for the common good, especially caring for the poor and those who have lost their jobs.

Indian bishops slam Last Supper parody at Olympics

By Bijay Kumar Minj

Indian bishops and laity groups have joined Catholics around the globe to deplore the parody of Leonardo da Vinci’s iconic painting of the Last Supper at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony.

"The Last Supper is not merely a piece of art but a profound symbol of the Holy Eucharist, established by Jesus Christ himself," said a press statement from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI). The July 29 statement signed by CBCI’s public relations officer Father Robinson Rodrigues said the organizers of the Olympic Games which symbolize unity and respect among diverse cultures and faiths, should uphold the highest standards of sensitivity towards all religious beliefs.

"The organizers of the Olympics need to address this grave incident with the seriousness it warrants, the current apology issued by the Olympic committee is extremely distasteful. The Vatican in its condemnation and for a poor and those who have lost their jobs.

Pope’s August prayer intention

We pray that political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and for the common good, especially caring for the poor and those who have lost their jobs.

The Herald Wishes all Priests A Very Happy Feast of St. John Mary Vianney, the Patron Saint of all Priests (4th August 2023)
CCBI Releases 4 Volumes of the 8 Volume Series:
“Guidance of Prayer for the Holy Year 2025”

Dr. Stephen Al athara

Panjim: Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão, President of the CCBI, released the 4 volumes titled “Guidance of Prayer for the Holy Year 2025” on July 29, 2024, at the Archbishop’s House in Panjim, Goa. This series is a response to Pope Francis’s call for the Year of Prayer leading up to the Jubilee 2025.

The release ceremony was attended by dignitaries, including Bishop Simiao Puriﬁcação Fernandes, Rev. Dr. Stephen Alathara, Deputy Secretary General, Fr. Duming Gonsalves, Mr. Nelson Fernandes and Ms. Annie Fernandes.

The series is a comprehensive exploration of prayer in its various forms, serving as an introduction and reflection on the power of prayer in encounter and experience God’s love.

Through historical anecdotes and wisdom from celebrated saints, the book sheds light on the significance of prayer in today’s Church. It delves into the writings of renowned saints, offering guidance on prayerful conversations with God.

This masterpiece is an invaluable resource for personal and community prayer, particularly for bishops, priests, deacons, catechists, and the faithful on their spiritual journey.

As the Catholic community prepares for the Jubilee 2025, “Guidance of Prayer” emerges as a beacon of spiritual guidance. Internationally acclaimed authorship brings depth and insight, making these volumes an indispensable companion for those seeking to deepen their prayer life.

For Cokes contact: Email: ccbipublications@gmail.com

Sec: 0888730224.

CCBI Launches Matrimony Portal for Indian Catholics

Panaji: The Family Commission of the CCBI unveiled a revolutionary Matrimony Portal on July 26, 2024, at the Archbishop’s House in Panjim, Goa. This innovative platform is designed to help Indian Catholics find their perfect match, fostering stable and happy family life. As the sun shone brightly on the feast day of Saints Anne and Joachim, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Eminence Filipe Neri Ferrão, President of the CCBI and Archbishop of Goa and Daman, inaugurated the portal with a blessing.

The launch was attended by dignitaries, including Bishop Simiao Puriﬁcação Fernandes, Rev. Dr. Stephen Alatham, Fr. Arul Raj Gali, Fr. Duming Gonsalves, Karl Fernandes and Vinuta Fernandes of Missionary Families of Christ and Marlon D’Cruz and Diana D’Cruz of Crossiders for Jesus with Mary.

The Matrimony Portal, integrated with the Catholic Connect App, promises a unique experience with its feature-rich platform. Users can enjoy stringent proﬁle veriﬁcation, faith-based matchmaking, advanced privacy and security measures, a user-friendly interface, and free registration. Accessible via the Catholic Connect mobile app and website catholicconnectmatrimony.com, this platform is poised to transform the way Indian Catholics ﬁnd their life partners.

Fr. Arul Raj Gali, Secretary of the CCBI Family Commission, emphasized that the portal is more than just a matchmaking platform. “We aim to help couples build happy and stable families,” he said. “To support this, we are providing counselling services to help resolve problems early on.”

Fr. Stephen Alathara, Deputy Secretary General of the CCBI, expressed the hope that this will be a very useful platform for Indian Catholics, “Our Catholic Connect platform, launched in January 2024, has already seen tremendous success. We are excited to expand our services with the upcoming Migrant Portal and Job Portal.”

Catholic Connect, an initiative of the CCBI, has been providing specialized online services for the Indian Catholic community. From daily mass readings and prayers to news and information, this platform has become a beacon of faith and connection.

As the CCBI Matrimony Portal embarks on its journey, it’s clear that this is more than just a platform – it is a bridge connecting hearts and souls. Matrimony portal is freely available in Catholic Connect App or on the website catholicconnectmatrimony.com.

For more information, contact 87822 50836 or 89406 55851.
By Nicolas de Cardenas
The motto of the modern Olympic Games, “Faster, Higher, Stronger,” was coined by French Dominican Louis Henri Didon, who became friends with the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, five years before the 1896 Athens Games. The motto, originally formulated in Latin as “Citius, Altius, Fortius,” was chosen both for its modern Olympic movement at St. Albert the Great School in Paris, where the Dominican friar was the principal. Born in 1840, Didon entered the Rondeau Minor Seminary in Grenoble, France, beginning at the age of nine, and during his youth, he stood out for his ability as an athlete. After visiting the Carthusian monastery in Grenoble, he decided to follow a religious vocation and took the habit of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) at the age of 16. Six years later, after a period of formation in Rome, he was ordained a priest at age 22. Military chaplain, prisoner, and refugee during World Wars I and II (1916, 1940, and 1944) and married, he resumed his sometimes controversial preaching activity, which led to his being sent to Corzica in 1889.

A decade later he was appointed principal of St. Albert the Great School in Paris where he established sports as part of the school educational programs and promoted sporting competition. This decision was the result of belief in the value of sports which had influenced him to have with Pierre de Coubertin since 1891.

In the first race they organized, the Dominican friar decided to embroider on the school flag the famous motto, which would become an Olympic motto in 1894, during the first Olympic Congress held in Paris in 1894.

Two years later, Athens hosted the first Olympic Games, which have since been held every four years, interrupted only three times due to World Wars I and II (1916, 1940, and 1944) and postponed from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Kate Quinn
Top government officials in Iran and Turkey, along with other Muslim religious figures, are speaking out against the drag-queen-led pardon of the last Supper at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony that shocked Christians and others across the world.

The supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, condemned the “insults” against Jesus Christ, noting that Jesus is a “graded moral and spiritual weight” which we face.

“Respect for Jesus Christ... is an independent, definite fact for Muslims,” Khamenei said in a post on X.

“We condemn these insults directed at the founder of the Christian world, but also as much as us as the Catholic world, not only the Catholic world, not only the inclusive world we want to build and that athletes, with their sporting testi-fy, may be messengers of peace and authentic models for young people,” Khamenei said.

“Christian leaders condemned the ceremony portrayal. "This disgraceful act showed a complete lack of respect for the beliefs of religious people and the high moral values they hold dear," the statement read. "The council unequivocally rejects all attempts to demean religious symbols, beliefs, and sacred figures."

Muslim leaders condemned "disgraceful" Olympic scene: It 'offended us as much as them'
Writeup on Christian Brothers

Sir, This write-up “The Christian Brothers in Calcutta in the early 1990s: The Unsung Heroes” by Dr. Sobhit Chatterpadhyay published in the Herald, July 26-Aug 1, 2014, I found very interesting and inspiring. A Hindu by birth but moulded himself in Christian faith, in the line of many great thinkers of Bengal, Keshav Chandra Sen, Brahmanandha Upadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore and many others of Bengal Renaissance. His Hindu faith was nurtured and developed along with Christian thoughts and spirituality. The Christian brothers played a huge role in his educational upbringing.

In our post-modern times, Dr. Chatterpadhyay is playing a great role to give witness to his Christian belief, along with his Hindu philosophy of Shakti. Rightly, he has given this appreciation and tribute to Christian brothers who shaped his life principles to contribute to the changing mind set of our present society. His experiential knowledge in dialogue can help develop a sound and healthy dialogical encounter through panel discussions and seminars. That’s the need of the hour today to build bridges in dialogue and be inclusive in our way of thinking and life.

Further to his write up, I feel it is essential to highlight the beginning of the presence of the Christian brothers in India. "The Christian Brothers came to India in January 1890. Four Brothers (Vincent Carey, Fabian Kenneally, Edward Aherne and Ambrose Flynn) arrived in Kolkata from Ireland at the request of Pope Leo XIII. From Kolkata the Brothers moved to St. Patrick’s, Asson and the very next year. In March 1892, the Brothers took over St. Joseph’s School, Nainital, which was constructed 3 years earlier".

The United Christian Forum (UCF) Meets Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju

Sir, This letter has reference to a front page report in the Herald 26 July-01 August 2024, where a delegation from the United Christian Forum (UCF) met Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and urged him to get all the anti-conversion laws repealed. Following India’s independence, Parliament introduced a law and a bill of anti-conversion, but none were enacted. First, the Indian Constitution (Registration and Reconversion) Bill was introduced in 1954, to enforce “licensing of missionaries and the registration of conversion with the government”. This bill failed to gather majority support in the Lok Sabha. This was followed by the introduction of the Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill in 1960, “which aimed at checking conversion of Hindus to ‘non-Indian religions’ which included Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism”.

Present Scenario

The following 11 states have enacted anti-conversion laws to stop change of religion (from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam) by individuals or groups through inducement, force, coercion or any other fraudulent means:

1. (9) West Bengal (2018),
2. (10) Karnataka (2022),

The above eleven states have enacted anti-conversion laws which violate the laws where a delegation from the United Christian Forum (UCF) met Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and urged him to get all the anti-conversion laws repealed. Following India’s independence, Parliament introduced a law and a bill of anti-conversion, but none were enacted. First, the Indian Constitution (Registration and Reconversion) Bill was introduced in 1954, to enforce “licensing of missionaries and the registration of conversion with the government”. This bill failed to gather majority support in the Lok Sabha. This was followed by the introduction of the Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill in 1960, “which aimed at checking conversion of Hindus to ‘non-Indian religions’ which included Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism”.

Anti-conversion laws passed in the above states have been challenged in courts. Some states have more stringent anti-conversion laws than others, and impose both jail term and heavy fine. In U.P this Act is not applicable to one who reconverts to his/hers own previous religion. There have been instances of conversions from government authorities. Some states have transferred to the Supreme Court.

§ Anti-conversion laws passed in the above states have been challenged in courts. § 21 petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court of India over anti-conversion law cases pending in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Karnataka. The Supreme Court has not declared anti-conversion laws in the above states to be unconstitutional for trampling on the Right to Freedom of Religion and nowhere has all the High Court cases on these laws been transferred to the Supreme Court.
Liturgy

MY FAVOURITE SAINT

Saint of the Day for August 4

Saint John Mary Vianney

A man with vision overcomes obstacles and performs deeds that seem impossible. John Vianney was a man with vision: He wanted to become a priest. But he had to overcome his meager formal schooling, which inadequately prepared him for seminary studies. His failure to comprehend Latin lectures forced him to discontinue. But his vision of being a priest urged him to seek private tutoring. After a lengthy battle with the books, John was ordained.

Situations calling for impossible deeds followed him everywhere. As pastor of the parish at Ars, John encountered people who were indifferent and quite comfortable with their style of living. His vision led him through severe fasts and short nights of sleep.

With Catherine Lassagne and Benedicta Lardet, he established La Providence, a home for girls. Only a man of vision could have such a home.

His work as a confessor is John Vianney’s most remarkable accomplishment. In the winter months he was to spend 11 to 12 hours daily reconciling people with God. In the summer months this time was increased to 16 hours. Unless a man was dedicated to his vision of a priestly vocation, he could not have endured this giving of self day after day.

Many people look forward to retirement and the desire to practice virtue, while others turned away disappointed, because Jesus’ challenge required a commitment that they were unwilling to make.

Life messages: 1) We need to receive our spiritual nourishment from the word of God. In the Holy Mass, the Church offers us two types of bread: a) the Bread of Life, contained in God’s Word, and b) the Bread of Life, contained in the Holy Eucharist.

2) We need to appreciate and gain the benefits of our Holy Communion with Jesus. Just as our normal food nourishes and strengthens our body, the Eucharist nourishes and strengthens our souls. 

3) The Eucharist do these things and much more in our soul. Holy Communion and the nourishment of our souls, produces a total transformation in us.

4) Brethren, and lay volunteers prepared and gave a nourishing sandwich to many thousands were hungry. In a number of cities, religious groups set up breadlines to feed the hungry. Outline the story of a man with vision.

(Continued from pg 4)

United Christian Forum (UCF) Meets Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju

§ On 3rd February 2023, the CJI-led bench sought responses from the above-mentioned state governments on petitions challenging the validity of Religious Freedoms Acts. It fixed 17 March 2023 as the next date for composite hearing (Times of India, 04 February 2023).

§ The Supreme Court on March 24, 2023 protected members of Christian community from coercive action by the Uttar Pradesh Police on the basis of an FIR registered under the State’s anti-religious conversion law [The Hindu 24.03.2023].

The 2001 & 2011 Censuses show Christian popu-

lation has remained static at 2.3%.

In view of this, the allegations of conversion full fat. Anti-conversion laws contravene the Fundamental Rights namely (1) Articles 12-17; 19-22, and 25-

28 on Right to Freedom of Religion. According to Article 25(1) “Every person has the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion”. This right is subject to public order, peace, morality, and health. However, the Right to Freedom of Religion does not mean a fundamental right to convert any

person to one’s own religion [Supreme Court of India - Rev. Stanislaus vs State of Madhya Pradesh & Others, 1977].

In view of the Supreme Court of India being seized of the composite hearing of anti-conversion cases, one wonders at the move of the UCF leaders.

Are they contemplating shelving the Supreme Court matter?

ISAAC HAROLD GOMES
Pilgrims of Hope - Zone II held on 20th July, 2024 at Infant Jesus Church Behala (comprising of St Ignatius, Ekbalpore, Stella Maris BNR & Infant Jesus Church Behala). Approximately 90-95 members were present. The Resource person Brother Ravi Samping, BEC Coordinator, Kolkata Deenery. The programme started with the Bible Procession and Enthronement. It was followed by Gospel reading by Rev Fr. Raja, Asst. PP IJC, reciting prayers emphasizing the growth of BEC and the fruit of the Orientation programs. Rev Fr Shyam, PP IJC with an introduction further highlighted Pope Francis’ message in preparation for the forthcoming Jubilee Year 2025, explaining the four main features of the doctrine.

The presentation set pace connecting the previous Orientation subject “Ten Commandments” to the Second Coming and the Kingdom Come - Our daily prayer (Matthew 6:10). The Final Prayers and Blessings was given by Fr. Raja.

Evangelise? Why do we Evangelise? How do we Evangelise? The session concluded with thanksgiving by Fr. Raja.

The Final Prayers and Blessings was given by Fr. Shyam. Vote of Thanks by Kenneth Salvador, Animator, IJC. Light refreshment was served to All.

BEC Orientation Program At Behala Parish

The Italian Catholic Forum expresses its disgust, dismay and outrage at the sexually perverted and historically distorted opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics 2024. It had more to do with uninhibited sex than the Olympics motto of Faster, Higher, Stronger. The almost nude depictions, emphasis on different forms of sexual orientation, watching perverted and historically distorted depictions we appeal to the French government and the International Olympic Committee to issue an unconditional apology for hurting the religious values of billions of Christians and even those of other faiths who hold the Lord Jesus in the highest esteem.

The ARCHDIOCESE

By Dominic Panja

On 28th July, 2024, St. Teresa’s Church in Mouladi, Kolkata, was abuzz with joy and warmth as the Catholic Association of Bengal (CAB) St. Teresa’s Parish unit celebrated Grandparents Day 2024. This special event honored the invaluable role grandparents play in families and the community.

The day’s festivities began with a solemn Eucharistic mass celebration dedicated to grandparents, the mass was celebrated by Rev Fr. Sunil Rozario and Our Parish Priest Rev Fr. George Anthony. The church was filled with families, young and old, coming together to show their appreciation for the elderly members of their families. In the sermon of Fr. Sunil Rozario he highlighted the wisdom, love, and guidance that grandparents impart, emphasizing their role in keeping faith and traditions alive across generations.

Following the mass from 10 a.m. onwards, a special program was organized by the CAB community in the Parish hall where more than 100 Grandparents took active participation in the program. The cultural program begins with a short opening prayer by our Parish Priest followed by a1 adorable and beautiful Bengali tradition, and with the timeless grace of the lighting of lamp ceremony. Our dignitaries Rev Fr. Sunil Rozario, our Parish Priest Rev Fr. George Anthony, Fr. Naveen Tauro, Mrs. Angela Mantosh, Sunny Maggart Collin (from Central Committee of CAB), President M. Ignatius Subhas Gomes our CAB President Parish Unit, James Lingam CAB secretary Parish Unit and Mrs. Sharmila Gomes were invited on stage to light up the lamp. Simon Gomes and Evan Gomes from the St. Teresa’s Youth committee performed a duo singing with their melodious voice and brought excitement to the Grandparents. Children from the Parish, Valentina Gomes, Christina Rozan from Sunday school performed a series of western dances, Albin, Christopher, Vincent Steve, Augustine Roy, Charles James from Altar service performed a Western songs and a1st Vincencia Gomes and Samantha Dias performed a energetic classical dance which brought a thrill and excitement and smiles to their faces. Small children from our Parish performed Poems and Rhymes in Bengali and English which brought a smiles and tears of joy to the faces of the attendees. Each of the participants were awarded after their performance. And got the appreciation from the entire people present in the hall that day.

A highlight of the celebration was that time when some of the Grandparents from our Parish came forward to perform a dance, song and shared jokes to those attendees not only that their grandchildren presented a touching gesture which symbolized the gratitude and love that the younger generation holds for their elders. Many grandparents were visibly moved by the outpouring of affection and respect.

To make the program more enjoyable the event also included a game lucky dip game where their luck helped them to win some exciting prizes. While the program was going on, dignitaries were invited on stage to take a flower pot from us as the token of love.

As the day was going to end the celebration concluded with a communal meal, where all the families of Grandparents were gathered to have lunch together, which shows the reinforcing the sense of community and togetherness. The joyous occasion left everyone with a renewed sense of appreciation for their grandparents and the blessings they bring into their lives. After the lunch members of C.A.B. Parish Unit gifted a First box to Grandparents Grandparents Day 2024 at St. Teresa’s Church was a heartwarming celebration that not only honored the elder members of our Parish family but also strengthened the bonds of love and respect among all generations after us. The day concluded with a memorable group photograph with the organizing committee of CAB and thanking everyone those who came forward to make that day a memorable for our Parish Community, and brought smile to our beloved Grandparents.

CAB Organises Grandparents Day at St.Teresa’s Parish

06 | The Herald Archdiocese

Kolkata | August 2-8, 2024
St Ignatius Loyola on July 31, but is it still faithful to its founder’s charism of innovation and critical enquiry.

For four centuries at least, from the Council of Trent (1563) to Vatican II (1962), the Society of Jesus—better known as the Jesuits—dominated the spiritual and intellectual life of the Church.

Their contribution was two-fold: in the field of religious education and in the area of popular religiosity. In the latter, for example, Jesuits spearheaded the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the Sodality movement.

This was not to distract us from the intellectual contributions of the Jesuits to the secular sciences, as in the work of Christopher Clavius (1538-1612), Athanasius Kirchner (1602-1680), and Athanasius Kirchner (1602-1680).

The Jesuits, a major contribution of the Council of Trent was the seminary system, whereby young men were trained to become priests through specialized courses in public speaking, philosophy, and theology. Before this innovation, a young man “aprenticed” himself to his local parish priest.

The Jesuits had invented this system, parallel to the schools they also ran, and soon each diocese in Europe clamored for a seminary, run by the Jesuits.

The 15th century also saw the birth of an invention that revolutionized communication: Gutenberg’s printing press.

Under Jesuit inspiration, the press also gave rise to the textbook, for use in Jesuit schools; and the catechism, widely disseminated in Jesuit parishes. These innovations are still in use today.

The early Society had a thriving intellectual life, not just in its colleges (actually “high schools”), but also among ordinary Catholics, who balled to hear its sermons, begged to “make a retreat,” and eagerly read its journals.

In India and China

And all this was carried out not just in Europe, but wherever the Jesuit sense of mission led them—on the soil of popular religiosity.

The answer is no, it does not. The Society of Jesus has been largely a force for the Establishment, and not for the poor and subaltern classes in society. This is not to say that Jesuits have not worked with the poor and the marginalized—they have, and they have done sterling work.

Consider for example Peter Claver’s (d. 1654) work with the slaves and Jesuit missions to the indigenous peoples—from the Paraguayan reductions (1609-1677) to the Canadian missions to the Huron (1634-55) to Fathers Lievens and Hoffmann in [what is today] Jharkhand (19th c.).

The reason why our ideology is pro-Papal State is because of our unwavering loyalty to the pope and the Vatican. “You have to be a pope to realize the value of the Jesuits”—Pius XI.

Ours is an ideology of obedience, not of dissent. No matter how free-thinking they may appear to be, Jesuits are not Protestants.

Why do I say “unthinking” loyalty? Because we have never subjected the Vatican and its structures to a critique of accountability. But how could we demand accountability, considering that in essence, our juridical structures are feudal, not modern and democratic? When I say “feudal,” I mean that our governance is based on the “divine right of superiors to dictate what must be done, and if accountability is sought, it is demanded of the subject to the superior—never vice versa.

No superior, no provincial, no bishop is ever held accountable to his subjects, whether individually or to the community. But the whole structure of modern democratic society is based on criteria of freedom, equality and accountability.

Wherever Jesuits appropriate these terms, they make for tensions. Thus, it is often asked: is perhaps Jesuit obedience in actuality a form of conformism, without anyone having the courage to dissident?

Reviewing Jesuit formation

For example: in the 1980s, the Society in South Asia engaged in a long and thorough discussion on Jesuit formation. It was agreed that formation was meant for mission, that is, geared to training for various forms of ministry.

One of the missions taken was to have one’s theological formation in the local language, and in a local setting, not in a “big house of formation,” in other words, in “a regional theologiate.” A change of place meant interaction with the poor, and dialogue with several local groups, something quite new.

The teaching stresses, in the big houses of formation felt nervous that an emancipatory agenda would be changing too fast to control the majority, and unsure whether young Jesuits would measure up. The new plan was quietly sabotaged.

True, for some years, this new system was put into effect, but the misgivings kept growing. Today, an account of the “status quo.” Jesuit institutions prepare people to take their place in the establishment, instead of critically questioning its structures, and resisting them, if necessary.

Have we been taken in by power privilege, prestige, and failed to be griped by issues of marginalization, impoverishment and exclusion? This is the question.

Transformation does not take place in a culture of conformity but in a culture of questioning, disagreement and dissent. This is the radical challenge.

The intellectual class on the whole, both within and outside the Jesuit society in the country, has not been able to rise up with the aspirations of the marginalized in Indian society.

Not even with groups who have the interests of the marginalized at heart, because our formation does not take place in dialogue with them.

We can speak of the intellectual life in India without the ideological dimension. Ideologies are related to building consciousness and providing power, so all ideologies tend to be political. An ideology raises questions about who has power, why one group has so much power over the other, and how the powerless are to be empowered.

If our mission is to empower the poor, and to transform them, we cannot do this without an ideological dimension.

Why do Jesuits shy away from these vital questions? And if Jesuits do not do this, then who will?
Wars, violence challenge Religious: Head of Assumption Congregation

By Michael Gonzalves
Sister Rekha Chennattu is the first Asian to head the Religious of Assumption, an international Catholic women’s congregation founded in 1839 in Paris primarily to educate young girls. The congregation re-elected the 60-year-old Indian nun as its superior general on July 16 for a six-year term. The biblical theology professed by the congregation in the office in 2018 to spearhead its congregation worldwide.

In the following interview with UCA News, Chennattu speaks about her priorities and the challenges facing her congregation.

Did you expect to be re-elected? What was your first reaction when elected a second time?

When I got an opportunity (to address the electoral body of leaders), I expressed my desire to return to India and resume my biblical ministry, teaching, research and writing. I had also packed my bags and prepared my office to welcome the new congregation without knowing the sisters and their realities. It took almost four years to visit provinces in the federation and interact with them. When I was re-elected, my first reaction was a feeling of not being ready. I felt strongly that I needed to be prepared. I could not repeat what I did in the first term! There should be continuity and discernment.

What are your priorities for your second term?

We are called to appropriate the synodal way of life as the core identity as Religious of Assumption. Our dream is to become a synodal international congregation. And so, our priorities include personal metanoia, promoting a culture of caring and quality relationships in our communities, practising synodal leadership styles, and strengthening our commitment to the people on the margins, migrants, and ecology concerns. We want to journey with youth and create decentralized, synodal animation structures. Revisit our partnership with our lay mission partners and develop a genuine way of life with the laity and other congregations, with our spirituality, way of life, and digital world have also penetrated secularization in our communities, homes, and workplaces. The social media and digital world have also penetrated different aspects of our religious life with positive and negative impacts. The painful realities of the abuses, like sexual abuse and abuses of power, in the Church and Religious life are other significant concerns.

Do your nuns carry out conversions?

No, we may work in social development and education, aiming to transform communities, focusing on women, children, youth, etc. For example, in India, we have boarding for school girls in Tilloli village. It is the only Catholic boarding for tribal girls in Nashik district (of Maharashtra state). It accommodates students between the ages of five to 17 years. Our sisters in India work among the poorest people in the villages and cities of Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Assam, and Kerala and work for their betterment.

How big is your congregation?

We have 156 communities in 34 countries and around 1,100 sisters and novices. Our sisters work in the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Europe. The congregation has 86 novices and postulants and around 150 lay workers. The age of the group varies from 18 to 45 years old. The motivations of those joining us are different in each case. What attracts them, I think, is our simple lifestyle, hospitality, friendly and open relationships, coupled with our social commitments. The laypeople feel very much at home in our communities; they join us for prayer, meals, etc.

How free are your sisters to disagree with superiors before reaching a consensus?

Our sisters are very daring to ask questions... challenge superiors. As superior general, I received letters from everybody everywhere... from novices to senior sisters. Yes, sisters in some provinces are freer than others. It also depends on their history. Diversity is the identity mark of our congregation. Although we share the same charism, we are so different.

What are the new forms of Religious life in the globalized world?

We live in an era marked by the complexity of the scientific revolution, vulnerability, and uncertainty... The numerical strengths of religious life are descending. I also talked about the changing demographics. The new forms of religious life involve coming one to become a synodal congregation, two is to collaborate with the laity and other congregations, and three is to harness the power of new technologies as they constantly interact with our spirituality, way of life, and mission.

What are some of your most important achievements?

The principles of continuity, discontinuity, adaptability, and novelty guided my leadership. I focused on seven areas: 1. Returning to our roots, such as the charism, and traditions of the congregation, by reinterpreting them for our times. 2. Formation of members, particularly biblical and theological formation. 3. Creating a culture of communication. 4. Going to the peripheries to serve and being transformed by those on the margins. 5. Restructuring in the congregation. 6. Promoting synodal and participative leadership and animation. More than 400 sisters helped me animate the congregation through different commissions and groups. 7. Making the connection with the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC). There seems to be a genuine interest to return to the biblical/municipal text... the Bible and theological thinking is very dangerous.

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you; if you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, if you can make dreams your master; if you can think and not make dreams your master; if you can choose to win by living with the loss, if you can write a-head not too good, nor talk too wise; if you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken, Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, And stoop and build ’em up with worn-out tools; if you can make some one half of all your winnings and risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss, and lose, and lose, and lose again, and never be sorry; if you can force your heart and nerve and sinew To serve your turn long after they are gone, and so hold on when there is nothing in you, Except the Will which says to them: “Hold on!” if you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch, if neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, if all men count with you, but none too much; if you can fill the unforgiving minute With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run, Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it, And - which is more - you’ll be a Man, my son!
Those who contributed to this symposium were, Dr. D. John Romus, former Dean of Theology, Morning Star Regional Seminary, Kolkata, who was the lone survivor of the historic encyclical Maximum Illud of Pope Benedict XVI, giving modern vision to the Church's missionary activity. Pope Francis declared Oct. 2019 as an "Extraordinary Missionary Month" (EMM) with the aim of fostering awareness of Christ's evangelizing mission in our time. "The symposium organized in Morning Star Regional Seminary was truly a leap forward and the need of the hour in these challenging times.

The book has six pertinent sections under which the experts in their respective fields spoke convincingly on the topic of symposium 'Local Churches in South Asia and Evangelization'. The contributions are divided under the headings as 1. Evangelization in South Asia – Theology and History; 2. Evangelization and Dialogue; 3. Evangelization and Indigenous Christian Movements; 4. Participation of the Laity in Evangelization; 5. Evangelization and Subaltern Movements; 6. Evangelization, Mission, and Advocacy.

Others who contributed to the discussion were, Abbot Jerome Naduvathuvalil, OSB, Dr. Jerome Silvester, IBS and Rev. George Thirumalachalil, SDB. S.A. Stanislas Devotta, Mr. Chito Francis Rebello, Dhaka, Journalist, Mr. Eugene Gonsalves, former AICU president, Bishop Sarat Chandra Nayak, Dr. Louis Prakash S.I., Dr. Sudhir Kumar Kujari, S. J. Dr. Shalini Mulackal, PBVM, Martina Josephine SJC, Lalit P. Tikej, S.J., Ms. Christy Mary, ICM, R.Sc. LL.B, & MSW, and Mr. Lee Jalal.

At the end of the book, pg. 518 it, a detailed C. V. with email ID of each contributor to this symposium is presented. This book contains 527 pages. This is the most valuable book in all the libraries of Seminaries, Colleges and Pastoral Institutes as reference for Pastoral Theology.

The book is designed and published by Claretian Communications, Chennai with copyright to Morning Star Regional Seminary, Barrackpore. The cover page design was done by Rev. Dr. J. Arokiasamy. The presentation being a part of the EMM across the Universal Church. The PMU General Secretary, CIAM and Fides Director, Fr. Fabrizio Meroni, PIME, Vatican City gave his wholehearted support to this symposium to promote the needs of the local Churches.

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Can religions afford not to know what causes non-heterosexuality?

By Bryan Shen

The difference between people who identify as LGBTQ and those who do not but have non-heterosexuality is vital for religions to know. The non-acceptance of homosexuality is as old as many religions. Homosexuality also exists in animals. Canadian biologist and linguist Bruce Bagemihl (1982), in his book Biological Exuence (1999) describes about some 450 species exhibiting homossexual behaviour. He also observed that animals all around are not bothered about homosexuality and mutated that perhaps humans should not be too.

However, although humans come under the genus of animals, classical definitions differentiate humans from animals with their capacity for conscious reasoning, which leads them to establish moral codes and religion. Almost all animal species have sexual behaviour, which is the difference between males and females in size, shape, color, mobility, metabolism, strength, etc. The difference of a male that improves the survivability of the next generation.

Some species are larger than males because producing more eggs is a strategy. Female birds that lay eggs may be dull in color and less capable to avoid threats. Male mammals are typically bigger and more robust, as protecting and defending are crucial. Good strategies improve reproductive success, which if poor, leads the species to extinction.

How does non-heterosexuality develop?

A large-scale GWAS (Genome-wide association study) by Sandra Ganna et al. (2019) confirms that genes contributing to same-sex behavior make up only 8 percent to 25 percent of predictability. If genes are significant determinants, predictability should be closer to 100 percent.

So, if it’s not genes or hardware, how does non-heterosexuality develop?

Brains have memories or ‘software’. Humans have many, including semantic memory, episodic memory, and conditioned emotional memory. The first two are known as declarative memories, as they are conscious and can be described via language. Animals don’t have declarative memories. They have conditioned emotional memories that are not consciously remembered and have no logic, just like a one-year-old human child can be conditioned to prefer or fear something without conscious reasoning, which can last throughout life.

Imagine a nurse robot with software called Alexa designed to tend to patients and maintain a robot with software called Siri designed to fix doors and windows in a hospital. What if their software was accidentally swapped? The nurse robot would only respond if you called it Siri and preferred to fix doors and windows. The maintenance robot would only respond if you called it Alexa and preferred to tend to patients. Some family and social factors can adversely affect ‘appropriate emotional conditioning’ below consciousness in humans.

For a boy, common factors include being bullied by boys, not liking boys, not playing sports, a bad relationship with his father/brothers, having more female family members, having more female relatives, being close to a mother, having a dominating mother/female, or concentrating a lot on studies, etc. For a girl, common factors include a poor relationship with her mother/sisters; witnessing her father maltreating her mother, continually being criticized at home, and being bullied by classmates. Other reasons could be witnessing women being mistreated by men, seeing the disadvantages of being female, seeing boys being favored, having poor relationships with fathers/brothers, toxic males around, not feeling safe with men.

When feelings of sex incongruences arise, it is not chosen, just like attraction to the opposite sex is not. However, what determines choices after that depends on familial/social mores or LGBTQ narratives the boy or girl is exposed to.

Does religion exacerbate quandaries?

Any response, supportive or against LGBTQ, that is devoid of education (of underlying causes of non-heterosexuality) can be detrimental. Religions that are prejudiced, condemning, admonishing, and punishing will drive children with unwanted non-heterosexuality further into hidden silence and heightened fear.

Religion, perfectionism, fear-based good behavior, susceptibility to vain glory, fraught relationships, and poor mental health are just some problems that will continue because underlying deficits and needs are not known. Religions that are compassionate, accepting, and supportive will also have the same underlying problems. Gains such as no LGBTQ expressions or LGBTQ relief and freedom, respectively, are just veneers.

What can religions do to improve the situation?

As there is much misinformation and darkness, knowing these four points may evoke an impetus for pertinent learning and response:

* There are many more people with non-heterosexuality who do not identify as LGBTQ. They can have opposite yearnings and visibility. A study by Pachankis & Bräström (2019) shows that 25 percent of all people with non-heterosexuality in Asia are hidden. This goes up to 94.7 percent in Muslim/African nations, and the global total is 75.5 percent.

* The emergence of people with non-heterosexuality is a sign of the neglect of spiritual morality in families and communitiess (see common human virtues such as preoccupation, striving, imposing, or liberating children according to what is considered good or not, with “open eyes” that makes humans feel like Gods) Gen 2:17, Gen 3:4-5.

* Morally sensitive children are more affected by immorality around them, and many choose to enter religious life. When religious formators refuse to look deeper into the issue because of fears, they are preventing the emergence of wounded healers among themselves, who can bring healing and dignity to many more who are suffering in silence. They also obscure the gravity of spiritual and moral decline in societies and the world.

* Current common ways of showing compas-

sion, acceptance, and support of LGBTQ are only increasing the good looks of veneers while underlying problems exacerbate. Religious authorities who prioritize the preservation of their good looks instead of truly endanger themselves and their followers through the sin of omission.
Protests as Indian Catholic college denies space for Muslim prayers

By Thomas Scaria

Waynad: More than 250 people died and 190 went missing in the “worst ever” landslide that devastated Kerala’s Waynad district on July 30. The grim news included 9 Catholic families from the St. Sebastian’s Syro-Malabar Church, Chooranmala, the affected region. Only one body was retrieved and buried, said parish priest Father Jibin Vattukulathil.

The priest told MattersIndia that he went into rescue operations immediately after the disaster. Since the parish church is not damaged, it is being used by the government machinery for rescue operations.

“Right now, we are fully cooperating with the rescue teams and providing food and drinking water to the teams,” said the priest, who is left alone with a few parishioners to help the victims as outsiders are not allowed.

Father Mathew Periyapuram, the vicar of the St. Xavier’s Forane Church in Kalpota, another town in the district, told MattersIndia that the Church in Waynad has extended all possible food, accommodation and other coordination facilities.

He said the bishop of Mananthavady has visited the affected region along with the vicar general to assess the situation. He has instructed his priests to provide full support.

In an age when people are ever more in thrall to audiovisual means of communication, and less so to abstract discourse, it seems strange that we set about removing those very means that, as well as forming part of our tradition, could prove most effective in transacting a message of faith. A similar argument could also be made regarding the decline in practices such as the use of incense during Mass. The Holy See has maintained the practice of ringing the bell at the consecration in St. Peter’s Basilica, although it has an excellent sound system. I also had the experience of a parish that restored the use of the signal bell after many years without it. Not only were there no complaints but the general reaction was very positive from all age groups.

Follow-up: Bells at the Consecration.

By Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum University

Q: The ringing of bells at the elevation is now omitted during the consecration; the reason given is that since the Mass is now said in the language of the parishioners, they should be aware of what is happening and are not in need of bells to tell them. Does not the ringing of bells at the elevation draw attention to the great event that has occurred on the altar? — E.H., Williamsford, Ontario

A: The General Instruction of the Roman Missal refers to bell ringing in No. 156: “A little before the consecration, when appropriate, a server rings a bell as a signal to the faithful.” According to local custom, the server also rings the bell as the priest shows the consecrated host and the chalice.

The text makes it clear that ringing a bell at the consecration is an option, not an obligation. Since the GIRM’s presumption is that Mass is celebrated in the local tongue, the use of the vernacular, in itself, cannot be used as a reason for the abolition of the bell ringing. There may be other good reasons, but they should be weighed carefully. A long-standing custom should not just be swept away unless more is to be gained by dropping it than retaining it.

The birth of the custom of a signal bell at the consecration, probably during the 13th century, had to do with the recitation of the canon in a low voice than to the language of the Mass as such. It may also have been inspired by changes in church architecture in which the people were more physically separated from the altar by the choir — and in some cases a significant number of faithful were impeded from seeing the altar during Mass. Thus the use of the bell became necessary.

Some centuries later the bell was also rung at other moments such as the Sanctus and before Communion. Certainly the practical reasons for ringing the bell have all but disappeared. Yet, it can still serve a purpose as an extra aid to call attention to the moment of the consecration, as a jolt to reawaken wandering minds and a useful catechetical tool for children and adults alike.

The Church comes to aid disaster-hit in Wayanad

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which the diocese functions, has urged the management to protect the college and managers, fearing the students’ protest could turn violent.

The demand has “no legal or moral standing,” Bishop Tharayil said in a statement on July 28.

The pressure was part of a plan for a “religious, communal and invasion of Christian institutions” and asserted that “any efforts to destabilize Christian minority institutions will be dealt with strongly.”

Nirmala College has maintained high academic standards. However, the recent developments will upset its educational activities, added the prelate.

The Catholic Congress, a lay association associated with the Church, condemned the protest and asked if it was the college’s responsibility to offer space for prayer.

The demand cannot be accepted “just because the mosque does not allow women inside it,” the organization said in a statement on July 28.

“Whenever the Muslim community does not make space for women to offer namaz, how can they ask a Christian management,” said a Church leader who did not want to be named.

The area has gruesome memories of fanatic violence inside a college campus.
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Holy Spirit, you who makes me see everything and shows me the way to reach my ideal, you who gives me the divine gift to forgive and forget all the wrong that is done to me and you, who are in all instances of my life with me.

In this short dialogue, I want to thank you for everything, and affirm once more that I never want to be separated from you, no matter how great the material desires may be.

I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. To that end and submitting to God's holy will, I ask from you... (Mention your request here...) Say 1: Our Father... Say 1: Hail Mary... Say 1: Glory Be...

Thank you Holy Spirit for answering my Prayers.
By a Devotee

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