



INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa where we have experienced one of the most powerful and destructive cyclones that Goa has gone through for a number of years. Many trees were uprooted in our campus, several electric poles collapsed and wires got entangled in the branches of trees. The electricity department worked overtime to restore the lines in 5 days. Meanwhile we managed with batteries and buckets of water to keep things going, Sebastian worked long hours to get the school campus back to the normal tidy place that it always is.

Br. James' sister- Ancy passed on in Delhi on the 26th of May. She was a Missionary of Charity sister and well known in Delhi for her service of love to the poor. A short message from James is included in the Newsletter.

This month's newsletter has the second part of the article on Dermot's passage to India. During the month Jerome McCarthy, one of the Senior Brothers of the African Province and a part of the Mystics group passed on in Boksburg on the 16th .of May

We were also very sad to hear about the passing of Ms. Samarпита Bramachari, a senior teacher in St. Mary's, Dumdum. She was a vivacious person and very committed to the school. Condolences to her family..

Fr. Stan Swamy is still languishing in jail. When his bail application came up for review the Judge asked him if he wanted to go into hospital. Fr. Stan said he had applied for bail, not for a hospital bed. So his case was adjourned to the second week of June!!!!. (Late News: Fr. Stan has been admitted to the Holy Family Hospital, Bandra. He has been diagnosed with Covid.)

A story that has not made the headlines is the fact that a number of NGOs of all religions have been volunteering outside the Goa hospitals to take patients from one hospital to another and arrange for Oxygen as well as bury/cremate people who have





died and who have no relatives in a position to perform the last rites. These volunteers have been called Covid warriors and have done a wonderful service at great risk to their lives.

Darryl Michael, a former Brother in the seventies has written a very interesting account of his life experiences after he left the Brothers. He is also looking for musically inclined Brothers and ex-Brothers to form a virtual choir. For further details please read the Post Script to his write up.

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, has requested for prayers as he goes in for surgery. His very practical and interesting reflections appear often in the Newsletter.

Yours fraternally

Mark

LIVING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Few expressions so succinctly summarize what is asked of us as Christians as does the expression “to live in the Spirit.”

It may well summarize Christian life, but it can also be little more than a very vague platitude. What does it mean “to live in the Spirit?”

St. Paul, in attempting to specify this, is anything but piously deluded or theologically abstract. Rather he speaks with a clarity that leaves almost no room for vagueness or false sentiment. He begins by a certain *via negativa*, telling us that, if in our lives there is “lewd conduct, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factionalism, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like”, then we are not living in the spirit, pure and simple.

Conversely, we are living in the spirit when, in our lives, there is “charity, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity.” (Galatians, 5)

This is a valuable insight, because if we take Paul’s word’s seriously, we can never delude ourselves into identifying true life in the Spirit with what it is so often confused with: false piety and over-privatized sentiment and confrontation out of hurt, paranoia, and narrow loyalties.

When the fruits of the Spirit are absent, irrespective of how spiritually confident and

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GRACE OF OUR EXISTENCE

KARL RAHNER





self-righteous we might feel or how right our cause might seem, then the Spirit too is absent. We must be clear about this.

The Spirit is present only when charity, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity are deeply in our lives – and permeate the air around us.

Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raajioon **To him we belong, to him we shall return**

Ancy fought the good fight, she finished the race !!

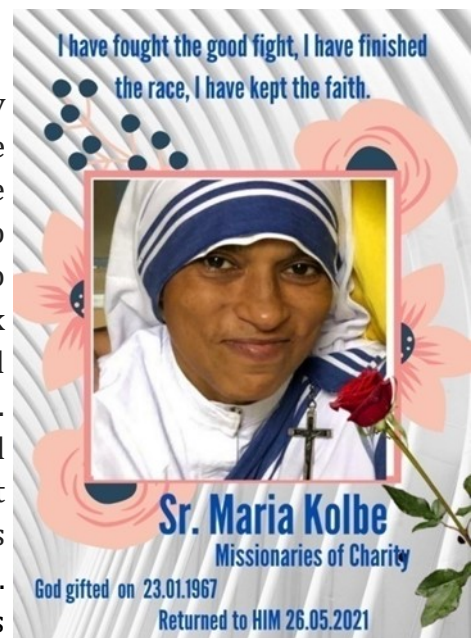
My family and our relatives, today, celebrate Ancy's most exemplary life of faith, trust and total dependence on God. In spite of all the pain, that she had to endure during the last 2 and half years, we never once heard her complaining about it or imploring the Lord to take the pain away from her. Instead, on every occasion we went to see her or contacted her over the phone; even before we could ask her about her condition, she would ask us how we were doing and always maintained that she was fine, when asked about her health. It's only after careful questioning, would it be revealed that she had umpteen sleepless nights and endured unbearable pain. She bore it all for our Lord. She has gone home after a very long purification, as Br. Bap rightly said. "We will miss her a lot, now that she has left us. But we are happy that her short stint here is over and that she is enjoying everlasting peace, in the place she always dreamed of, in the company of the Almighty and His Host of Saints and Angels and our parents and relatives."

She is much closer to us now, than when she was alive. Our family has one more angel in heaven, praying and interceding for each one of us !!

Ancy's funeral is tomorrow at 10 am. My sister Mary, my brother Jacob (Sonny) his wife (Bindu) and daughter (Anna) are flying to Delhi tomorrow early morning. Accommodation for them is arranged in St. Columba's. They might not get time to even freshen up properly and be in time for the funeral. After the funeral, they fly back to Panchgani. They will not be staying the night in Delhi. (they have left behind two dogs, a cat and parrot, which is a recent addition)

Thank you, for your condolence message and concern. God bless you.

James Joseph





Chapter – 2: LIVING THE DREAM @ CB SCHOOLS THE CHANDIGARH STORY

The disarming charm of Br Len gave Nandita and me the much needed warmth to cushion the early morning chill of Chandigarh as we exited the Mohali International Airport at 1:00am in the morning of 11th April. Sunday was a leisurely day as we were the first to arrive, a tad early though.

At the lunch table, we were enamoured by the welcome and openness of Br Philip, Br Steve, Br Brendan “Mac”, Br Gussy, Mr Andrew and of course, the “provider”, Br Len.

In the evening, Br Gussy guided us to enjoy the serene beauty of Sukhna Lake, a good half hour walk from the residence. Hailing from Kolkata, we had to have a hot cup of chai to celebrate the evening stroll. The remaining of the Lucky’7 started to join us, slowly but steadily.



Day#1: Monday, 12th April.

- ◆ **Spirituality**-the Edmund Rice Charism - by Br Philip Pinto,
- ◆ **School Leadership Skills**- by Andrew Pinto and
- ◆ **Enneagram of Personality** – adaptation of Don R. Riso model - by Br Mac.

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A beautiful and symbolic prayer service by Br Gussy set the tone of the Programme as well as the initiation to the first day's session.

Br Philip Pinto opened our eyes and minds in understanding the notion of Spirituality. A bold statement brought us back to the rationale of our presence that morning: *"By nature, Leadership is spiritual; the rest is Management."* Spirituality is the deepest acknowledgement of self, as it defines who we are and how we behave with others. *"My spirituality is my STANCE to the world; It's an intrinsic part of who I am; It governs my ACTIONS"*

Br Philip briefly took us through the life and works of Blessed Edmund Rice, and introduced us to the Charism of the Christian Brothers, in a simple yet profound statement, ***"Edmund Rice opened his whole heart to God, present and appealing to him, in the poor"***.

The second session "School Leadership" was animated by Andrew Pinto.

The first part in this session was on "Role of A Principal".

A first-time HM/ Principal should undertake the following:

- * Observing and noticing the activities all around the school
- * Listening and Learning from students, teachers, staff and parents
- * Interacting and collaborating with members of the staff
- * Must maintain low degree of Initiation and act in small ways

Based on the above actions, the image of a new HM/ Principal should include the following

1. Must be a team member
2. Must be a collaborator
3. Must be tactful
4. Must be a Peoples' Person

A new HM/Principal must have the following character traits:

- Ability – proven competence in class (as a teacher and hence must teach)
- Credibility – Must clearly outline, implement and follow the "rules of the game"
- Representation – Must be able to win the confidence of the members of the staff





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KARL RAHNER

- Buffering – Must be able to protect any and all members of the staff from outside influence

Post lunch session opened our eyes to the World of the Enneagram of Behaviour by Br Mac. The infectious energy of Br Mac, a multi-lingual world traveller, and a proponent of the Don Riso model of Enneagram, made it interesting to understand the intricacies of this vast and varied subject. What was personally appealing to me was the relationship between the value of Pi and the interconnectivity of the nine Enneagram numbers. Human behaviour can be triggered by any of these three factors – the **heart** or emotion, the **head** or reasoning and the **gut** or instinct. Hence the Enneagram is also divided into three Zones of behaviour. We then took a journey with Mac into the labyrinths of human behaviour through the Enneagram.

Day#2: Tuesday 13th April

Br Sean led us through the morning's prayer the central theme of which was interconnectivity.

Br Philip took off from where he left the previous morning, Spirituality and the Charism of the Christian Brothers. However, what stood out in his discourse was that "Brotherhood (as in CB) is a Stance". The spirituality of a person guides a person to act and behave in a way that is more meaningful than the religious rituals ingrained in us from early childhood. We are to open our hearts to the Larger God and this should transcend in to our classrooms.

Mr Andrew started the second session with an expose' on the importance of Relationships in School Management. The primary goal of a new HM/Principal is to create a positive and stable environment in the school. This could be achieved in three ways:

1. Create a positive environment built on fulfillment of all stakeholders
2. Create a stable and not a turbulent environment. This would improve the morale, the drive of all and increase personal productivity levels.
3. Maintain a healthy professional relationship based on
 - Cooperation and Collaboration, Mutual respect, Mutual trust, Sensitivity of each other, Open communication, and Healthy boundaries





Over time, the education management paradigm has shifted:

- Empowerment rather than Delegation of duties, building trust rather than demanding loyalty and facilitating rather than dictating.

There are four basic styles of Management based on the Interpersonal Style Matrix. Using quadrants defined by two-character traits – Sociability & Dominance, managers could be of four types: Analytical, Directive, Expressive, and Supportive. If I could read the thoughts of my fellow participants, it would not have surprised me that most of us would have liked to be in the top right quadrant, namely possessing a Directive Style. Not to be confused or misinterpreted with the Enneagram Types of Human Behaviour analysis, the management styles are more work-related while the latter is more response-related.

That night, we were informed that the Chandigarh session is prematurely terminated due to emergency local Covid'19 protocols. Chandigarh was aiming for a lockdown, even though night curfew was in full operation. It was heart breaking to accept that we had to vacate the Brothers' Residence at the earliest, as per the advice and directives of local authorities. One by one, we started to reschedule our flights back to our hometowns with the promise to stay in touch and inspire each other.

To celebrate the Bengali New Year on the 15th, Br Sean donned the Chef's hat ably helped by an energetic Br Lur prepared a most delicious dessert with fresh and exotic fruits. The ever observant and silent worker, Br Gussy would ensure all preparedness and provided timely information and communication. We missed the opportunity of interacting with Ms. Kavita C. Das, the Principal of St. John's High School, Chandigarh and gather some wholesome tips on maintaining the top spot in private school education. We will miss Le Corbusier's city and the Jacaranda, the jasmine and the beautifully manicured lawns and gardens of St John's.

Looking back at the Induction Program, I feel blessed to be part of this progressive society of educators. What started in a small building on New Street, near Waterford in Ireland, the Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice has spread across the globe to reach out and touch millions of hearts and minds. On behalf of my fellow "inductees" I express heartfelt gratitude to all the animators of the eleven sessions and in particular Br Gus and Br Ralph. You are the architects of experiences, and your shared vision will guide us to live the Edmund Rice Mission. Finally, shouting out a big "Thank You" to Br Len and the staff at "Brothers' Residence" Chandigarh for making sure our stay with you, albeit curtailed, was a memory to last a lifetime. Slainte Mhaith !

Mr. John Gomes with inputs from Ms Nandita and Br. Lurshai





Landing In India

Part 2

March 7th, 1953 Dermot travelled to Delhi en route to Mt Abu. When he arrived at the school Dermot found the whole place was eerily quiet – everyone had gone for ‘walks’ in the jungle.

While he was putting his box into the room assigned to him the Superior, Bro BC Morrow came in to welcome him and brief him concerning the situation in the school.

“Did you ever hear of the ‘shooting?’”¹

“Don’t talk about it as the Brother (Stan Joachim) from whose room the gun was taken is in the community!” (This was the second time he had been welcomed with the story of a murder!)

In 1953 St Mary’s Mount Abu was in the depth of depression because of the withdrawal of so many boarders after Independence in 1947 and the uncertainty about whether the Brothers should even continue to minister in India given the fact that so many Christians had left the country. The decision was taken, on the advice of ‘Rome’, to take in Indian children of other religions and to teach them to be good, moral people and citizens but this transition was long and slow and the school’s finances were at a low ebb, necessitating the acceptance of loans from the local merchants in the bazaar.

Dermot was given the pre-Seniors to teach ... all subjects except Hindi (English Language; English Literature; Math; Add Math; History; Geography; Scripture; Health Science). He had no previous knowledge of Indian History, Indian Geography or Health Science so he had to ‘bone up’ on all these subjects as well as taking boarding duties and games ... and spend time in prayer when all the work of the day was finished ... Dermot never used corporal punishment in class and as a result he was criticised by other Brothers for being ‘too easy’ on the boys, but one of that class later spoke to Dermot during a retreat in Shimla and told him “*You were interested in each one of us and we knew it*” and that was why they cooperated fully with him.

In the Final Bombay State Exams of the following year Dermot’s class scored FIVE places in the first ten positions in the whole of Bombay State (1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th& 9th)!!! This was, for Dermot, a definite confirmation of affirmation for the quality of his spiritual life. Looking back over sixty years Dermot could truly say: “*Abu was the honeymoon experience of my life!*”²

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In 1955 Dermot was still in Mount Abu when BC Morrow was replaced as Superior by Eoin O'Keeffe. He was not sympathetic to Dermot's spirituality and showed his hostility by maintaining a sustained silence for months on end. The immediate outcome of this was that Dermot was on the 1957 Christmas Transfer List, back to Bow Bazaar. When the results of the Senior Cambridge Exams were published Dermot's class secured 13 Distinctions, 4 First Class, 1 Second Class which included 13 'Ones' in Health Science. For Dermot this was a definite affirmation from Jesus for his work and commitment.

When he arrived in Bow Bazaar Bro PC Hart gave him a Senior Class to teach along with studying for his First Arts in the University. At that time they were in the process of changing from the professorial system to the Class-teaching system in Bow Bazaar so Dermot was expected to teach all subjects there again as he had in Abu, bar Hindi or Bengali.

Then, on February 5th 1959³ while Dermot was in Dum Dum, studying in preparation for his University exams, he went to attend his doctor in the city. While he was there he saw the Provincial, Bro Ben Maher on the other side of the street, who called him over and said, without any introductory context: "*I forgot to tell you ... We are sending you to Rome to attend the Jesu Magister Course there*". For Dermot this was yet another affirmation of his spiritual commitment to the mystic movement.

From March to October of that year Dermot was assigned as socius to the novice master, Bro Oliver Slattery, in Mt Carmel, Kurseong. And by October 1959 he was in Rome (1959 - 1962), where the central focus of his interest, besides the regular courses he was to take, was really to study mysticism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. All this time he was able to fully follow his heart's desire.

During his time there Colm Keating was also studying in Jesu Magister and Dermot took an opportunity to tell him in detail of his own mystical experiences. Colm listened attentively but noncommittally and it was to Dermot's great disappointment that Colm never broached the subject with him again. Now Colm was a man of great depth and high spirituality and yet ... he never showed any reaction to the Mystic Story either then or in later years.

In 1961 John O'Malley returned to Ireland, on leave from South Africa and he arranged to spend a week in Rome with Dermot. *This was 'one glorious week'* for them both. They were meeting for the first time since they had parted in Ireland. Dermot had been through his experiences in India and John had been through his rough times in South Africa and this was the first opportunity Dermot had of hearing of these sufferings. He was deeply saddened by the pain John O'Malley had to endure from his own Brothers there.

In 1962 Dermot completed his course in Rome and graduated with the highest mark (45/50) of any Brother that ever did the Course (JCK got 44/50). This was for him yet another divine affirmation of the spiritual path he had chosen to take.





After this he was given a three-month holiday in Ireland where he was feted and applauded by Bro E F Clancy in Marino who was exceptionally proud of Dermot's high marks. He even personally accompanied Dermot to the Brothers' holiday home in the village of Howth to visit Colm Keating as a treat. But while he was very proud of Dermot's academics he never mentioned the topic of the Mystics. Again Dermot saw this as an affirmation and a 'lap of honour for Mysticism'. *"Well done, good and faithful servant, because you have been faithful in so many things ..."*

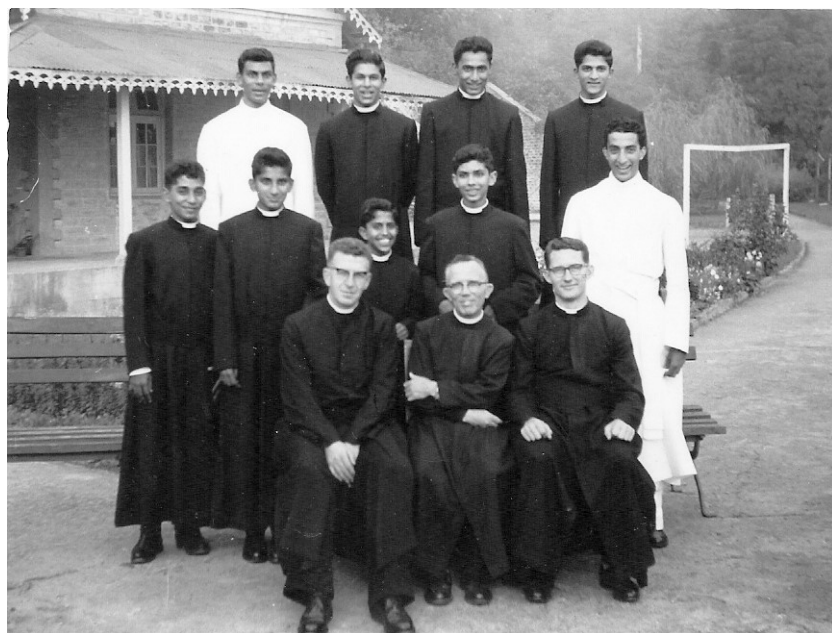
On returning to India in September 1962 Dermot was temporarily posted to Asansol to relieve Bro PC Hart who was filling in for Bro Delahunty who had fallen ill. He was to be socius to the Novice Master, Bro Ollie Slattery but he did not take up his role there until January 1963.

1. In 1933 a pupil had taken a shotgun from a Brother's room and had killed two other students who had been bullying him.
2. When asked if there was any reaction among community members to the fact that he was labelled a 'Mystic' but Dermot gave an assurance that there was nothing like that in the community in Abu.
3. anniversary of the sports day on which he received the grace of mystic union

Another Long & Winding Road

It's now over a month since Mark, very graciously asked for a page on this guy's life after leaving the Monks post-Christmas 1977, lessons learned both from the journey that followed and, more pertinently, from my 13 years with the CBs. Still among my most formative and memorable.

Coincidence, serendipity... call it what you will, but as I put virtual pen to paper, right now it's 55 years to the day since our Reception in Mt. Carmel - 31 May 1966. The 'our' being Eric Stephen D'Souza, Gordon Savio Morris, Peter Augustine Menon, and yours truly, Darryl Conrad Michael.



(Middle Row: L to R:

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Gordon Morris, Peter Menon, Eric Steve D'Souza and Darryl Michael)

It's been quite the road since leaving. Start with turning up one early Jan'78 morning at St. Mike's, Kurji, by then a Jesuit school, in the hope of landing my first lay job – armed with just Norbert Foley's recommendation. The open-armed welcome remains something never forgotten. Not just from the Jesuit community but by families, never met before, who opened their doors and hearts: ex-pupils from our schools. Helping a naïve, young ex-Monk start a new life was their way of paying it back. This respect & credibility the Province held would turn out to be a tangible asset I've since greatly treasured.

Fast forward a year & a half: we (make that I) uproot our young family from Patna to the hills of Solan with the late Bishop of Chandigarh, Gilly Rego, trusting that his first lay principal would rescue an ailing school, St. Luke's. Talk of blind faith in action! It featured horrendous living conditions, overt opposition from the departing incumbent, a staff that were pretty much all older and skeptical of the youngster taking over. It turned into 10 of our happiest & most transformative years. A book on its own! The Monks were much in our orbit - St. Edward's, Shimla, north of us, St. John's Chandigarh to our south; and, of course, out east, St Edmund's, Shillong each winter – ask Steve. There were visits from the likes of Mel McCann and Tom Moynihan; even an invitation to take on Goethals, that Philip may remember, that one was unable to accept because of existing commitments.

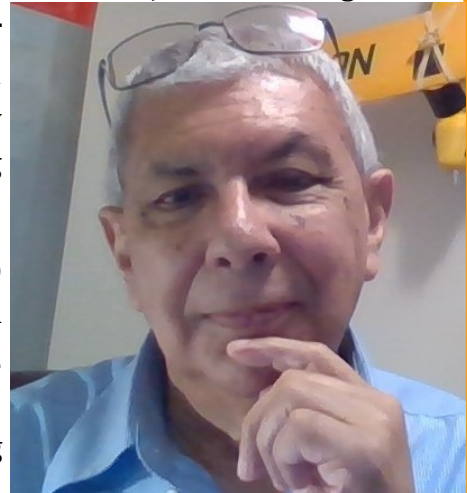
'89 saw us pull up stakes again, invited by the Varkey Group to help plan, set up schools across the UAE while heading one in Fujairah. A totally different ethos and quite stressful but an education in itself. The four ensuing hectic years later enabled the switch from K-12 education to management consulting when we took the plunge and followed my parents & siblings to Canada in 1993.



They'd originally emigrated in 1969 thanks, in large part to the Monks, who initially hosted them in Mono Mills, north of Toronto. Tough years for the Congregation – warm memories for the Michaels.

As for us, we settled in Ottawa where a consulting stint with Coopers & Lybrand – a leap of faith hiring someone they called a 'maverick' – resulted in being invited by IBM in 1997 to help lead a different form of Learning & Change, this time for thousands of adult end-users adopting a system called SAP.

24 years later, now managing quality for projects coast-to-coast in Canada, one realizes with deep gratitude that beliefs, values & friendships stemming from March '64 when one first climbed that hill to Carmel, still run very deep. And to all of you, our door here in Ottawa is always open.





P.S. Music was always big in the Monks, so here's an invitation to a Virtual Choir, just for you, using an AI-based app. Ignore the tech, give it a try!

<https://www.choirless.com/dashboard/choir/0011Z2xy0IRGtQ0ASz9b24JI4w3SIYwj>

Log on with the username, 'erice042121@gmail.com' and the password, 'Virtual21monks'

And if you need help, my email's 'dmichael1750@gmail.com'

WhatsApp '+613 720 5461'

First Profession of Rashal in Bhopal

Rashal's first profession was earlier kept for May 5th. However, owing to the pandemic lockdown and some of us testing positive, the profession had to be put off. Naturally, we were disappointed because the preparation and singing practice we had done



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under Br.Elton's guidance, all seemed gone waste.

After discussion with the PLT, the profession was held on the 17th May, without any visitors. Fr Ronald, the PP, and the Asst. Fr Herman, kindly agreed to celebrate the Eucharist, with Br. Parag, the delegate of the Provincial. A grand lunch followed the mass. We were grateful for Br Parag's baked



chicken, and to Dillip and Emi for the trifle.

With Rashal's profession came the end of our Orientation program. Br. Elton managed to get tickets for Rashal, Sanjoy, Ritesh and Dilip, who left for their homes by the 20th of May. Unfortunately, Sonshine and Emi couldn't make the trip to Meghalaya because of the serious state of affairs there. Thereby they had to accept keeping Ranjeet company in the novitiate, and taking part in some common classes, games, manuals, projects, cooking and fun-activities.

In the meantime, our mango grove flourished. While some of our community members were in quarantine, others kept guard over the mangoes. Once Br. Parag decided to remove the mangoes, Ranjeet and Emi climbed the trees and plucked the fruit. All was not easy, as they got cicatrices on their hands and face, because of the sap.

"As you sow, so shall you reap". We now have around a thousand of mangoes ripening, enough for us to eat as long as the lockdown persists. You readers are welcome here, to sample the fruit.





JTI CLUSTER BULLETIN

MAY 2021

As we approach the feast of Sacred Heart, I pray in the words of Noel Davis,

*“Is my heart big enough
To embrace life wholeheartedly –
Its joys, sorrows, fragility, uncertainty?
Dear God may it be so.*

*Is my heart big enough
To keep opening out to life, when the temptation
to settle, be secure, feel safe grows ever more persistent?
Dear God may it be so.”*

How do I keep my heart big enough when loving consciously becomes tough and challenging?



After Jerry's Renewal of vows ceremony in Umyrkhang



Two brothers with green fingers working away in the veg garden

UMTYRKHANG

Jerry renewed his vows on the 5th of May. It was a community affair without visitors due to the lockdown. He had a day of recollection a few days later in the Franciscan Retreat Centre, Orlong Hada which is an hour away.

The month was relatively quiet due to the total lockdown imposed in the district. The Brothers requested the Village Head (Rangbah Shnong) to speak to the people about COVID related norms and share the protocols decided for the district. The meeting was held thereafter and the explanation shared by the village ASHA (Accredited Social

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GRACE OF OUR EXISTENCE
KARL RAHNER





Health Activist) workers was particularly helpful. So far, the village has no COVID case.

The Brothers are utilising their time in reading and preparing assignments for their MA studies. The vegetable patches with maize, long beans, turmeric and ginger also keeps them busy. The available time has also enriched community life as Brothers enjoy playing some board games together or occasionally watch a movie.

The total lockdown has restricted the supply of provisions. The community has the basic provisions that they need as of now. On the 13th, Bipin's birthday was celebrated in a simple manner.



At the Renewal of vows ceremony of Vinod and Jerry



The Vaccination Awareness Program in Patharlyndan

PATHARLYNDAN

Even as the Cow Project is being reviewed, the two milking cows are ensuring up to 10 to 15 litres of milk each day. The distribution of milk also serves a wonderful way to engage with people from the local villages. The Brothers sit and chat about everything that concerns the people. These days this is done with great care keeping the protocols in mind.

The district announced that all schools will be closed and with that there were fewer ministry related activities in the month. The Brothers invested their time in gardening and carpentry. They are surprised when they realise how gifted they are.

With the support of the local Health Centre, the Brothers coordinated a vaccination awareness program in the village. The Doctor and the health workers cleared many doubts and misconceptions that people held about vaccines. Leading by example, the Brothers received the first dose at the earliest opportunity.

The village people get ten kgs rice per family under Kalyan Anna Yojana. The Village leaders had requested the people to donate some rice for those who are serving quarantine in the village. The Brothers respectfully remind the Village leaders about this as this extra rice remains unutilised or cannot be located when needed.





The Renewal of vows for Vinod and Ajay on the 5th of May was the highlight of the month.

ERPAKON

In April, Jockey, Mahendra and Sunil formed the community in Erpakon. The effects of the second wave of the pandemic began to hit us here only towards the end of the month. Things began to change rapidly then, with the state administration having no option but to call for a lock down.

Sunil got ill during his stay in Patharlyndan and had to cut short the trip. He went for a COVID test, it was negative. Meanwhile most of the Cluster Brothers have got themselves vaccinated as a few are waiting their turn. community too had its share of birthday celebrations in April with the birthday boy Jerry on the 29th.

Sunil Britto

POETRY SECTION

TOMORROW

Because it happened others it must have me.
They too are searchers for selves, so must I be.
When then I found a version I could use
I simply did what did, yessed or refused.
So each day snared the morrow.

Raggedly then becoming happened. I didn't know.
Miserably, but manageably, I opted to grow.
Masked myself in conformity, obeyed,
Learned empty tracts, and of course prayed,
So each day snared the morrow.

Like branding cattle we were recognised –
Only the identical were domestic prized.
The different, smarm them with blinds and masks,
Say flattering things, if any of them asks,
And say goodbye tomorrow.

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Thus India: hands soap-washed in relief
 I left doll-hood, explored deeper belief.
 Miracled too: both death and love dropped by –
 The first to nod, the last changed earth to sky.
 A new day promised a morrow.

Years felled me, fooled me, finally affirmed me.
 Time fought me, taught me, finally confirmed me.
 Here my four score done, there's much I understand.
 All those tomorrows showed me my promised land.
 Love is the name for every morrow.

Brendan May 2021

AFTER DERMOT

(For Br Dermot Barrett RIP, Indian Province)

You might have felt the plunge
 like when your plane hits a pocket
 and you lurch into a question-mark
 about yourself: why?what?where?
 I felt it too, when he died.
 Answers hung around awaiting delivery,
 and nudges and affirmations, but
 such message as I gathered
 just said, carry on.
 So I do, peering dubiously through eyes
 unused to the half-light of his absence.
 I'm tempted to sort-of opt out:
 retreat into the safety of predictability.
 Then I begin to descry, that's not on.
 I wonder now if that itself is my sign-post,
 the telling me post-mortally "Get on with it!"
 Be brave. Quit the hesitations -
 that must be it.
 Well then: yes. Yes.

Brendan

