



INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa where the weather is beginning to change perceptibly. The mornings are cooler and from time to time there are a few showers.

It is with feelings of sadness, that we have received the news that Brendan MacCarthaigh left for Ireland at the end of October. Brendan has made a huge contribution to the Province in various fields. He collaborated in writing books on Value Education, started an NGO called Serve to highlight the shortcomings of the Indian Education system and the pressures it put on students, conducted programs in the Enneagram, promoted inter religious dialogue, taught in an NGO which worked for the poor and various other projects. He was not afraid to swim against the tide and at time received little support. He has received many awards for his pioneering efforts. In his earlier days he was a great English teacher and his students still remember him with awe

The Indian Province will miss his ever cheerful and enthusiastic presence. The streets of Kolkata could tell us several stories about this Irish gentleman, who cycled through the maze of traffic in the course of his ministries. We wish him all God's blessings in his home country.

It is very heartening to read a document released by the Vatican entitled "Widening your tent" which talks about women ordinations, the LGBT community, divorced Catholics and others who are excluded from the church.

Joan Chittister, in her talks often speaks about the relationship between contemplative prayer and prophetic action, Included in this Newsletter are 2 reflections on Prayer and prophetic action. To ignore prayer and prophetic action is to ignore the core of the message of Jesus.

Conrad D'Souza is recovering from a surgical procedure that has put him out of action for more than a month. He is presently undergoing Physiotherapy. Prayers are requested for his quick recovery.

As the war in Ukraine continues with more and more innocent people losing their lives, we pray for peace in this war torn country.

Yours fraternally.

Mark



CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

The method of prayer commonly called Centering Prayer, has been popularized by persons like Thomas Keating, Basil Bennington, John Main, and Laurence Freeman. It is sometimes viewed with suspicion by people who identify it with anything from “New Age”, to Buddhism, to “Self-Seeking”, to atheism.

Understood and correctly practiced this method of prayer, which allows for some variations in its practice, is in fact the form of prayer which the Desert Fathers, John of the Cross, and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* call contemplation.

In contemplative prayer after a brief, initial act of centering oneself in prayer, one simply sits, but sits inside the intention of reaching out directly towards God in a place beyond feeling and imagination where one waits to let the unimaginable reality of God breakthrough in a way that subjective feelings, thoughts, and imaginations cannot manipulate.

The difference between meditation and contemplation is predicated on this: In meditation we focus on icons, on God as God appears in our thoughts, imagination, and feelings.

In contemplation, icons are treated as idols, and the discipline then is to sit in a seeming darkness, to try to be face-to-face with a reality which is too big to grasp within our imagination. Meditation, like an icon, is something that is useful for a time, but ultimately, we are all called to contemplation. *The Cloud of Unknowing* puts it: “For certainly, he who seeks to have God perfectly will not take his rest in the consciousness of any angel or any saint that is in heaven.”

Karl Rahner agrees: “Have we tried to love God in those places where one is not carried on a wave of emotional rapture, where it is impossible to mistake oneself and one’s life-force for God, where one accepts to die from a love that seems like death and absolute negation, where one cries out in an apparent emptiness and an utter unknown?”

That, in short, is contemplative prayer, authentic centering prayer, as a discipline.

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



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RUMI





THE EXAMPLE OF THE PROPHETS

For Father Richard Rohr, the work of justice is rooted in the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures. He says: Christianity has given little energy to prophecy, which Paul identifies as the second most important charism for building the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11). Too often, when Christians talk about prophecy, we think prophets make predictions about the future. In fact, prophets say exactly the opposite! They insist the future is highly contingent on the now. They always announce to the people of Israel that they have to make a decision now. You can go this way and the outcome of events will undo you or you can return to God, to love, and to the covenant. That's not predicting the future as much as it's naming the now, the way reality works. The prophet opens up human freedom by daring to tell the people of Israel that they can change history by changing themselves. That's extraordinary, and it's just as true for us today.

The prophets ultimately reveal a God who is “the God of the Sufferers” in the words of Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965). I'd like to put it this way: it is not that we go out preaching hard and difficult messages, and then people mistreat and marginalize us for being such prophets (although that might happen). Rather, when we go to the stories of the prophets and of Jesus himself, we discover the biblical pattern is just the opposite! When we find ourselves wounded and marginalized, and we allow that suffering to teach us, we can become prophets. When we repeatedly experience the faithfulness, the mercy, and the forgiveness of God, then our prophetic voice emerges. That's the training school. That's where we learn how to speak the truth.

The prophets were always these wonderful people who went to wounded places. They went to where the suffering was, to the people who were excluded from the system. They saw through the idolatries at the center of the system because *those who are excluded from the system always reveal the operating beliefs of that system*. Speaking the truth for the sake of healing and wholeness is then prophetic because the “powers that be” that benefit from the system cannot tolerate certain revelations. They cannot tolerate the truths that the marginalized—the broken, the wounded, and the homeless—always reveal.

Are we willing to take the risk and become prophets ourselves? It's not that we get to preach or speak hard words and then feel justified and righteous when we are excluded. It's that we experience some level of exclusion or heartbreak, and then we have the inner authority to preach what may sound like hard words. Sadly, they will sound like very harsh and even unfair words to people who have never been on the edge, or the bottom, or who have never suffered. The prophets always bring the sufferers to the center.

Center for Action and Contemplation





Oratory set up in Edmund Rice Centre, Bogmalo

The ERC community took up residence at Anant Vihar, Bogmalo in early March, 2022. It was decided to have an oratory in the house. So, after getting the necessary permission from the Archbishop of Goa, Filipe Neri, and having the necessary inspections done as required by the Liturgical Commission, the decree was granted to install the oratory. On October 11, 2022, the Episcopal Vicar of South Goa, Fr. Lucio Dias and the parish priest Fr. Teo Fernandes in the presence of the Brothers in the community conducted the ritual and had the Eucharist celebrated and the Blessed Sacrament was put in. It was well-timed to have got the oratory ready for the retreat being held here between October 17 and 23.



The retreat was conducted by Fr. Cleo Fernandes of the Bombay Archdiocese. Besides the community, Bap Finn, Martin Fernandes and Larry Miranda attended the retreat.

Farewell for Br. Mac in Chandigarh

Lewis Lopez and his family, John Xavier & his wife Niti, Grace David & her mother and the Chandigarh community at the farewell dinner.

A Tribute to Br. Brendan, composed by Martin was read out at a farewell dinner by Bob.

Dear Mac,

We, The Pilgrims, would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to you





for your immense contribution to not only the life but also, may we say, the continued vitality of this group.

Few, if any, can recall when you last missed a gathering of the Pilgrims. You undertook long journeys, set aside the excuse of age and health or the breaking of your busy schedule to be with us. Many, younger by more than a decade, could not match your energy and enthusiasm.

God has blessed you, Mac, with an intellect and giftedness far beyond the ordinary. To say you were a prophetic presence among us would not be an exaggeration as you discerned the need of the hour and encouraged and goaded us to respond. It was you who often rocked the boat and made us uncomfortable. You made us believe that neither age nor infirmities could restrain us from making a meaningful contribution to the Congregation, leading the way with SERVE, work with senior kids and your weekly "Letters".

We are grateful to you Mac for all this and much more, and are disappointed and saddened at your sudden departure from the Pilgrims, pupils, friends and a country you made your own. You will be missed.

We assure you of our prayers and good wishes and hope that someday "hum phir milenge".

Good luck and God bless you.

Gratefully,

The Pilgrims





Centenary Celebrations in St. Edmunds College

Tucked away along the old Jowai Road on the way to Fire Brigade is an institution famous in North East India for its vision. This is St. Edmund's College, instituted in the year 1923, and run by the Congregation of Christian Brothers founded by Blessed Edmund Rice.



PART OF CHEMISTRY LABORATORY, COLLEGE HOSPITAL AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS.



In the midst of Pine trees, modern classrooms and old Assam-type office spaces co-exist... a time capsule. Any old student will remember old haunts, while taking in the changes, be it the existence of clubs where the youth sharpen their minds, or setting new academic benchmarks in the region,

through their emphasis on inclusive education vis-à-vis visually impaired students.

All set to observe the centenary year in 2023, the famous, electric 'Edmundian' buzz is in the air. On November 5 this year, the college will inaugurate the year long celebrations.

From The Meghalayan



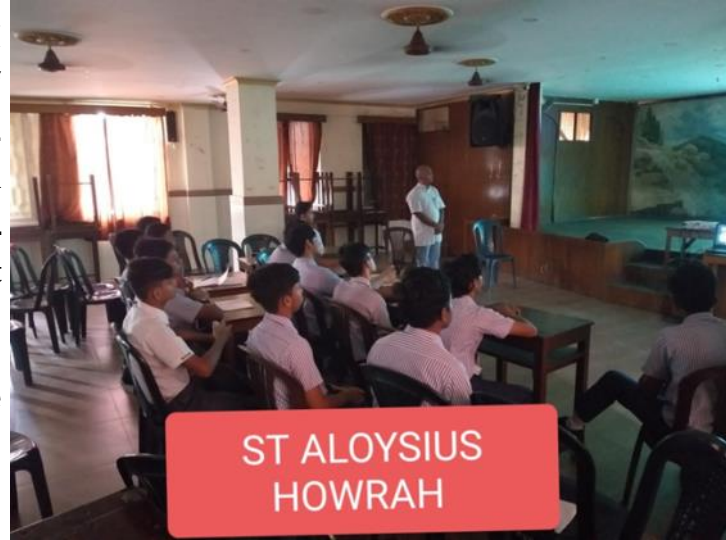


VOCATION PROMOTION PROGRAM IN OCTOBER

ST. ALOYSIUS ' ORPHANAGE & DAY SCHOOL, HOWRAH (WB)

After the Durga Puja holidays, I had visited St. Aloysius ' Orphanage & Day School Howrah. I had a session for an hour with class 8 -12 Students of the school. The school strength is 1300 but there are very few Catholics.

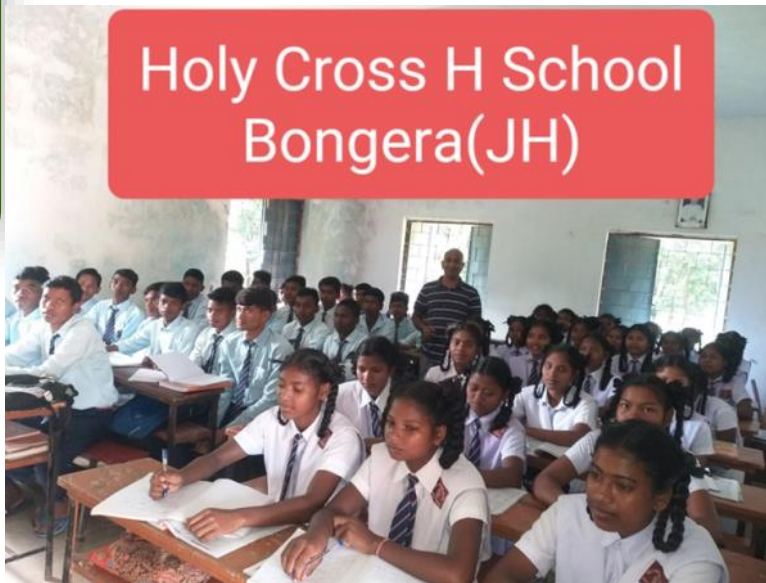
8/13 said Yes to know more about us.



ST ALOYSIUS
HOWRAH

HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL BONGERA (JHARKHAND)

Holy Cross H School Bongera(JH)



On the 17th of this month ,I was in Holy Cross High School Bongera and interacted mainly with Class 9-10 Boys and Girls,(52), apart from catholic students some Christian students too attended the talk. It was an introductory talk on Vocations.

From Class 10 - 3 boys are keen to remain in contact.

Class 9 - 4 boys

R. C. UCHHAVIDHAYLAY BHITBHUNA

On the 18th I had an interaction with the students of class 9 and 10. They were 40 in numbers including girls. One boy is keen to know more about the Brothers /Vocation.



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JAYANTI UCHHVIDHYLAYA GANGUTOLI

On the 19th of this month, I had given a talk to 40 catholic boys of Classes 8 to10 in Gangutoli Parish School. 23 students are very keen for future interaction in order to know more about Religious Life and Calls.



Jayanti

A Report on the Refugees in Synge Street

We received another 54 refugees during that month. Their accommodation is very basic as there are between twenty to thirty refugees per room and they have to share five showers and toilets. So conditions are cramped.

It was agreed that this group of refugees would be with us for two to three weeks and then they would move on to more permanent housing. But as you know the government has bitten of more than they can chew regarding housing refugees. With a growing housing crisis we have run out of places to offer reasonable accommodation to refugees. So those refugees who have come to Emmaus will remain with us for the foreseeable future with limited facilities.

Not all is negative. These refugees are in a warm and well maintained building. They are being well fed and have good spaces to socialise. I have seen small groups barbecuing out in the grounds and sharing food together.

As the weather is still mild they are able to get out and about both in the grounds around Emmaus and in the neighbouring park.

We've had a wetter autumn than usual but thankfully it hasn't disrupted the lives of our visitors too much.

Some of the Ukrainians who came last April have expressed a desire to return home. I suppose with the onset of winter and shorter day light and longer evenings life is not a spontaneous as when they





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first arrived. I was speaking to a lady who is in her seventies and she is upset that she can't go home now. She misses her home and friends. She doesn't know how to fill in her



time stuck inside the building for many hours a day. She tried to learn English but has given up she says she can't remember any of the words or expressions that she has been taught. We need to develop new little projects that will help to fill in the time for this lady to relieve the monotony.

POETRY SECTION

'My Dying Conscience'.....

Sometimes in the dark of the night,
I visit my conscience
To see if it is still breathing,
For its dying a slow death
Every day.

When I pay for a meal in a fancy place.
An amount which is perhaps the monthly income
Of the guard who holds the door open.
And quickly I shrug away that thought,
It dies a little.

When I buy vegetables from the vendor,
And his son "chhotu" smilingly weighs the potatoes,
Chhotu, a small child, who should be studying at school.
I look the other way
It dies a little.

When I am decked up in a designer dress,
A dress that cost a bomb
And I see a woman at the crossing,
In tatters, trying unsuccessfully to save her dignity.
And I immediately roll up my window.





It dies a little.

When I buy expensive gifts for my children,
On return, I see half clad children,
With empty stomach and hungry eyes,
Selling toys at red light
I try to save my conscience by buying some, yet
It dies a little.

When my sick maid sends her daughter to work,
Making her bunk school
I know I should tell her to go back.
But I look at the loaded sink and dirty dishes,
And I tell myself that is just for a couple of days
It dies a little.

When I hear about a rape
or a murder of a child,
I feel sad, yet a little thankful that it's not my child.
I can not look at myself in the mirror,
It dies a little.

When people fight over caste creed and religion.
I feel hurt and helpless
I tell myself that my country is going to the dogs,
I blame the corrupt politicians,
Absolving myself of all responsibilities
It dies a little.

When my city is choked.
Breathing is dangerous in the smog ridden metropolis,
I take my car to work daily ,
Not taking the metro,not trying car pool.
One car won't make a difference, I think
It dies a little.

So when in the dark of the night,
I visit my conscience
And find it still breathing
I am surprised.
For, with my own hands
Daily, bit by bit, I kill it, I bury it.

Rashmi Trivedi.





**JTI CLUSTER BULLETIN
NOVEMBER 2022**



As COP 27 takes place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt from 6 to 18 November, we reflect on the following analogy by Pope Francis,

When the Tower of Babel was being built, it's said that human arrogance back then wanted to make it higher. How high, I don't know.

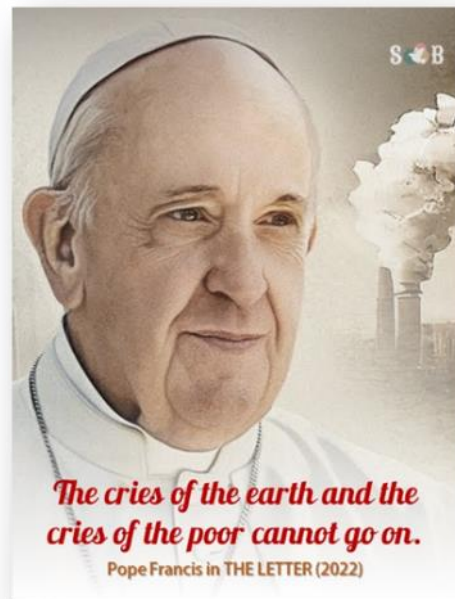
And bricks were made by so many workers. If a brick fell, the worker who dropped it was brutally punished.

If a worker fell, it was no big deal. They replaced him and kept working.

And that's the key to interpreting what's going on today. We're building a tower of human arrogance with bricks of power, bricks of economy.

And to build that, so many people work like slaves. And if a slave falls, nothing happens.

But we've taken an extra step. If nature falls, nothing happens.



~ Pope Francis, The Letter (2022)

(Watch the movie: <https://youtu.be/Rps9bs85BII>)

PATHARLYNDAN

All the three brothers are very actively involved in teaching in the RC Lower Primary School. The Computer Literacy Project is also progressing well with 12 students who regularly attend the classes and are picking up the skills rapidly.

Edmund Rice Youth Action and the Brothers organised the annual Edmund Rice Football Tournament held for the youth residing in surrounding villages participated by both men and women's teams. Huge numbers gathered cheering their respective teams. The village teams look forward to this tournament annually.

The village headman and his council had called the Brothers and Edmund Rice Youth Action office bearers to demarcate the boundary for Lum Laudato Si'. The group went

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around the perimeter of the Lum Laudato Si' planting rocks at strategic points. There is a lot of enthusiasm in the youth and the leaders of the village in the afforestation project.

The Brothers assisted by Samuel, our project coordinator organized a training on safe use of LPG gas stoves. The trainers were called from Indane Gas Agency from Mairang. Many people in the village who are beneficiaries of the Ujjawala Yojana scheme attended the training. The trainers explained the use of the gas safety device, which could prevent accidental fires and shut off leakage of gas, if any. Some families in the village have bought the device and others have applied for it.



Safe Gas cooking training for the people organised by the Brothers



An Edmund Rice prayer service in Patharlyndan

UMTYRKHANG

It's heartening to see the children responding well to the English classes in the three schools in the mornings as well as the tutorials in Umtyrkhang in the afternoons. As we are also in the process of planning for the upcoming year, we are engaging with the people of Umtyrkhang for the possibility of training a teacher for the village school.

In the last week of August, Jerry along with Jockey organised various competitions like art, singing, dance and volleyball games for the children of the three villages of Pamlatar, Mawlaho and Umtyrkhang to mark the death anniversary of Edmund which culminated with a prayer service for the people of Umtyrkhang on the 28th of August.

The turmeric is growing well and with help of local wisdom, the Brothers are learning what needs to be done for its better growth and effective processing. The cycle for mushroom planting begins in November. Hay needed for the planting will be readily available, as the rice harvesting will take place soon. Other materials are ready. We are collaborating with Vendrame Center Mawpdang where earlier in the year the Brothers and some people had attended the mushroom plantation training.





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Jerry passionately in teaching work in Mawlaho Primary school

Bipin sharing the story of Edmund Rice to senior students of St. John's

ERPAKON

All the Hub members have been regularly visiting the two mission communities as part of our offering support and pastoral care. Bipin is teaching and helping out in cocurricular activities in St. John's Secondary School, Jyntru. The Solar house lighting project is complete and we are now using solar electricity in the house. We have put up a greenhouse where we have planted vegetables. The practical acumen of Joaquim and Bipin come in very handy in the planning and supervision of these projects.

To mobilise action around ecology, Sunil was invited by the Archbishop Victor to give a short presentation to the priests of the Archdiocese during their monthly gathering. The response was very positive from around 70 priests gathered there.

Sunil was later invited to speak to the Heads of Schools/Colleges in the Archdiocese. Around 100 were present and the presentation was well received. Later Sunil attended the three-day annual Northeast Regional Bishops Pastoral Conference in Guwahati. The theme was based on Climate Change. It was uplifting to see and hear the energy for urgent ecological action.

For our monthly recollection in September, we invited Peter Dowling to give us the input. John Casey was welcomed to give us the input in October. The presentations were well prepared and reflective. They were based on the Spirit statements from the Dublin Chapter.

The next Recollection is based on the third Spirit statement from the Dublin Chapter and will be on Saturday 12th November. David Gibson is happy to give a 45-minute input at 9 am.

We will use Zoom this time and the link is:

<https://bit.ly/saturdayrecollecionzoom>

