



Paper or Plastic?

Work & Environment

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INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa where the power cuts are regular but of late less frequent. One waits patiently for the monsoons to arrive. The state of Kerala according to the weather bureau is getting heavy rain.

From all accounts, Brothers of the Indian Province attended a very successful post congregation province chapter. Many thanks to Michael Burke who once again proved his versatility as a Facilitator. Thanks are also due to Philip and Anish for preparing daily accounts of the chapter process and to Steve Fernandes for sending them to the Brothers so promptly.

On the 15th of this month, Pope Francis canonised India's first layperson, Davashyan Pillai, a great honour for the church in India. One hopes that the Indian hierarchy now gives a greater say in the running of affairs to lay people. One of our prominent Archbishops is reported to have said that the role of the laity is to pray and pay!!!!

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues besides the thousands of people who have died, and the millions who have become refugees, the people of many countries are suffering due to shortage of petroleum products, steep rise in prices and political unrest. A case in point is Sri Lanka. India is experiencing an inflation rate of 15%. The World Bank has forecast that many other countries in Asia, Africa and South America could follow suit. **What is the Spirit saying to us through the sufferings of so many people?**

Catholics in India are overjoyed by the announcement of two Indian Archbishops being appointed as Cardinals. One is Archbishop Felipe Neri Ferrao and the other is Archbishop Poola of Hyderabad. Archbishop Ferrao is the 6th Goan to become a Cardinal, a very great achievement for the tiny state of Goa. Archbishop Poola's appointment is of special significance as he is a Dalit.

One is happy to read that Fr. Stan Swamy, S.J. has not been forgotten. He will be receiving posthumously the Martin Ennals Award for Human Right Defenders on June 2.

Yours fraternally.

Mark



A CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE

In 1977, Catholic bishops in Latin America gathered to name their situation of shared violence and to commit themselves anew to the gospel of peace:

We live in a whole climate of violence. There is violence in the area of economics by reason of acute fiscal crises, the repeated devaluation of our currencies, unemployment, and soaring taxes—the burden of which ultimately falls on the poor and helpless. There is violence at the political level, as our people in varying degrees are deprived of their right of self-expression and self-determination and of the exercise of their civil rights. Still more grave in many countries are human-rights violations in the form of torture, kidnappings, and murder. Violence also makes its appearance in various forms of delinquency, in drug abuse as an escape from reality, in the mistreatment of women—all tragic expressions of frustration and of the spiritual and cultural decadence of a people losing their hope in tomorrow.

Here we may not scurry for cover to empty theories or hide behind condemnations of one group by another group. The violence is here; it is a fact. Injustice exists; this is reality. As Christians we may not abide this. We may not allow ourselves to grow accustomed to evil, least of all to an evil that is daily and constant.

In a series of sermons, radio addresses, newspaper articles, and public speeches, Archbishop Óscar Romero (1917–1980) of El Salvador called the people of his church and his nation to return to gospel values, particularly those of justice and love as a way to end violence.

I will not tire of declaring that if we really want an effective end to violence we must remove the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, exclusion of citizens from the management of the country, repression. All this is what constitutes the primal cause, from which the rest flows naturally.

When the church decries revolutionary violence, it cannot forget that institutionalized violence also exists, and that the desperate violence of oppressed persons is not overcome with one-sided laws, with weapons, or with superior force. . . . As long as there is not greater justice among us, there will always be outbreaks of revolution.

Reminding listeners of the commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves, Romero preached: If there were love of neighbour, there would be no terrorism, no repression, no selfishness, none of such cruel inequalities in society, no abductions, no crimes. Love sums up the law. Not only that, it gives a Christian meaning to all human



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relations. . . Love gives plenitude to all human duties, and without love justice is only the sword. With love, justice becomes a brother's embrace. Without love, laws are arduous, repressive, cruel. . . But when there is love—security forces would be superfluous, there would be no jail or tortures, no will to beat anyone.

Richard Rohr

SILENCE

*What we need most
in order to make progress
is to be silent
before this great God
with our appetite
and with our tongue,
for the language
he best hears
is silent love.—John of the Cross,*

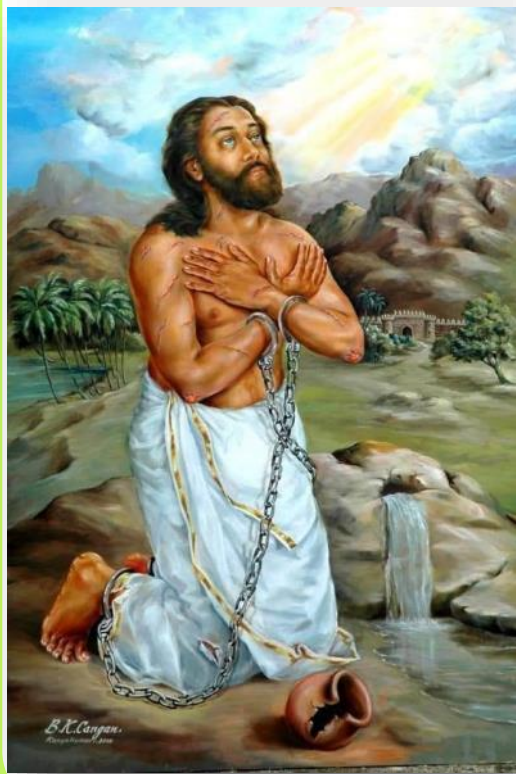
Lazarus Devasahayam: 'A saint for new beginnings'

A Hindu-born man from Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, who converted to Christianity in the 18th century, Lazarus Devasahayam is set to become the first Indian layman to be declared a saint on 15 May 2022.

Devasahayam, who took the name 'Lazarus' in 1745, was first approved for sainthood in February 2020 for "enduring increasing hardships" after he decided to embrace Christianity.

As the postulator for his cause, **Father Joseph Elphinstone** told Vatican Radio that Devasahayam is a poignantly significant figure for India today, as he embodies a model of fraternity and recognition of the dignity of all persons, regardless of religion or of social standing.

In fact, Fr Joseph explained, born to an upper-caste Hindu family,





he embraced Christianity and championed the rights of India's lowest castes preaching the equality of all people despite rigid caste differences. But first, he emphasized, this canonization is a high honour for the laity that is increasingly involved in the life of the Church and its people.

Father Elphinstone explained that this is a significant time for the Catholic Church in India, "a vibrant Church that is growing and is moving towards the laity," a laity that is becoming more and more involved in different activities and is, in fact, "the centre the Church is trying to serve." Devasahayam's canonization a "historic moment" To have a layperson "being honoured and elevated to the highest rank is the best and highest honour we can give to the laity," he said.

The fact that Devasahayam was able to do great things, contributing to the Church, to the community and to the people is being transmitted to Indians today, he continued, and thousands of people are flocking towards this saint. He is a saint who is very concerned about people, "their problems, their worries, their differences, their cultures," he said.

"So, it's going to be a great beginning. He has left a great legacy for the Indian laity."

A champion of equality: Lazarus Devasahayam has also left a great legacy in the field of rights, of equality, as he - a Hindu upper-class man who preached equality despite caste differences - was close to the marginalized as he followed the Gospel of Christ.

Father Joseph explained that "many may think that he was killed, martyred, just because of his conversion," but that is not the case because in the kingdom of Travancore where he served and converted to Christianity, "the king himself built a small chapel for him, he appointed and paid for the chaplain," and he worked alongside the Carmelite missionaries who were working there.

"What was not tolerated was that being a high caste man, he had no barriers after he became a Christian" and he forged ahead following God's Word that all His children are equal.

For him, Father Joseph said, there was "no barrier, no difference, no high and low, no rich and poor, no class caste."

Christians, he said were considered a low and insignificant community and when this saint "freely started moving with them, chanting with them, celebrating with them, mingling with them, eating with them," the high caste people in the palace could not tolerate it.



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"His life became something which they couldn't tolerate and that made them kill this saint."

Devasahayam is particularly significant in today's context, Father Joseph continued, also because he is totally in line with Pope Francis' call to undertake a synodal process of collaboration, dialogue, listening, discerning.

Until now, he said, "we were not giving much importance to listening to the voice of the lower and the laity and the ordinary people. Now, this saint has given a new inspiration," in this regard.

India today, Father Joseph said, needs to reflect on how to make a change. The caste divisions, he said, "are like cancer" in Indian society.

"We need to explore very much, reflect with him and promulgate the great values for which he lived and he died."

A proud moment for the country: "It's a proud moment, not only for the Tamil people, not only for Catholics in India," Father Joseph said, but for everyone as witnessed by the fact that the government is sending three ministers to the canonization ceremony in Rome.

The Canonization: Almost 6,000 people have applied for visas to travel to Rome for the Canonization. They are coming from India, Europe and the United States, Father Joseph concluded, expressing his personal sense of satisfaction and joy that his country has a saint who can become a symbol of bridge and communion.

"A unifier, a great person who can help everybody to respect other people and other religions, going beyond all divisions and showing us how to journey together towards a better life."

Linda Bordon from the Vatican Newsletter

FROM THE VOCATION PROMOTER

A number of programs were conducted in the month of March and April 2022.

St. Joseph's College, Nainital 29 March-11 April: The Christian Students of the boarding were addressed on Friday, 1 May. There were 16 students from Classes five to twelve. Sessions were conducted on the Life of Blessed Edmund Rice and on Vocation to the Christian Brothers. These students were met class-wise and later on individually. All the students were very much interested to know more about Blessed Edmund Rice and about the life of the Brothers. The brothers in the community are doing their best to promote Vocation and are inspiring the young ones by their vowed lives.





This was an introductory session in SJC and as a follow up, a personal letter was given to these students when they returned from their Easter vacation. An online Zoom meeting has been planned for these students in the month of June.

General Vocation Camp in Nongstoin Diocese: On 21 April, Brs. Theo, Bipin, Paistar and William were present at this camp to promote vocations. Only ten young men attended this camp. These boys had just given their Metric or the Higher Secondary Board Examination. The brothers conducted action songs; they shared their personal vocation stories and the life of the founder, Blessed Edmund Rice. The brothers had almost an hour and half of interaction with these young men. The diocesan Vocation promoter informed that all the ten young men had opted to join the priesthood.



Educational Soft Skills Program in Wahrinong:

A days program on Educational soft skills was conducted to the students of Wahrinong

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and Kynshi on 23 April. Ninety students of Classes eight to twelve attended the program. It was held at Edmund Rice Mangkara School Wahrinong. The resource persons were Br. Solomon Morris CFC, Sr. Shoria IBVM and a Sister from the VSDB. The students were very eager to learn and very much motivated. The sessions were very interactive and the students enjoyed them. The students were given morning tea and snack, lunch and evening tea as well. All the children enjoyed the program. The program was organized by the brothers with the help of their school staff.

William D' Souza

Pope Names 2 Indians as Cardinals



Catholics in India have welcomed the Vatican announcement about the appointment of the first Dalit



Truly Free Truly Alive





as a cardinal.

The elevation of Archbishop Anthony Poola of Hyderabad among 21 new cardinals created by Pope Francis was announced on May 29.

Another Indian prelate, Archbishop Filipe Neri Antonio Sebastao di Rosario Ferrao of Goa and Daman, is also to become a cardinal. "It is a proud moment for all Indians irrespective of their caste and creed," Franklin Caesar Thomas, coordinator of the National Council of Dalit Christians (NCDC), told UCA News.

Archbishop Poola will be the first Dalit and also "the first Telugu [native of Andhra Pradesh state] in the history of the Catholic Church to be appointed as cardinal, the second biggest title after pope," Father S. Bernard, vicar general of Hyderabad, was quoted as saying by the *Hindustan Times* on May 30.

Father Bernard further called it "an honour and recognition for the oppressed sections of Christianity."

It is a proud moment for the Archdiocese of Hyderabad and for the Telugu-speaking people, Father T. Victor Emmanuel, procurator and chancellor of the Archdiocese of Hyderabad, said on May 29.

Archbishop Poola will also now be part of the College of Cardinals, which comprises 229 cardinals, of whom 131 are electors of the pope.

Archbishop Poola was born in Chindhukur, Andhra Pradesh, on Nov. 15, 1961. He joined the minor seminary in Kurnool and then studied at St. Peter's Pontifical Major Seminary in Bangalore. He was ordained a priest on Feb. 20, 1992. He was 46 years old when appointed as the bishop of Kurnool on Feb. 8, 2008.

He was appointed as the archbishop of Hyderabad by Pope Francis on Nov. 19, 2020, and was installed as its 11th archbishop on Jan. 3, 2021.

Archbishop Ferrao was born on Jan. 20, 1953, in Aldona, Goa. He was ordained a priest on Oct. 28, 1979. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman at the age of 40 on Dec. 20, 1993. He was ordained a bishop on April 10, 1994, and assigned the titular see Vanariona.

He was appointed metropolitan archbishop of Goa and Daman and the patriarch *ad honorem* of the East Indies on Dec. 12, 2003.



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He was installed as archbishop on March 21, 2004. He also served the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) and Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) as its vice-president. He is fluent in Konkani, English, Portuguese, Italian, French and German.

He was elected president of the CCBI at its 31st plenary assembly in Chennai in 2019.

He is a former chairman of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) office of education and faith formation.

The 21 new cardinals — eight from Europe, six from Asia, two from Africa, one from North America and four from Central and Latin America — will be given their red caps by Pope Francis on Aug. 27.

UCAN News

First Profession of Ranjeet

April was an action-packed month with the on-going preparation for the first vows. The Novices put in their heart and soul to dedicate their time and energy to sing in the choir and get the house ready for the visitors among other nitty-gritties. Ranjeet made a week-long retreat to prepare for the first step he was to take, while Sanjoy and Dilip took quiet time to look back on their first year in the Novitiate.



The highlight of the month of April-May was the First Profession of Ranjeet. We were happy to have Ranjeet's family with us on this special occasion. The Archbishop, Most Reverend Durairaj, celebrated the Eucharist, along with the Parish Priest and the Assistant, Frs. Ronald Cardoza and Naresh, respectively. We were happy to have Brs. Steve F, Parag and William to take part and be with us. It is very rare that we get a Brother visiting us. Hence the occasion was apt! We did miss the presence of Hugo Caceras who couldn't make it due to covid. He assured us of his support and prayers.





The evening program created the perfect ambience for the 100 odd invitees. It was filled with the Provincial's address and raising the toast, the cutting of the cake, and a token of gratitude from Ranjeet's family to the Brothers. Amidst the singing of some cultural songs by his family, they also shared their appreciation for Ranjeet for having joined religious life; something that was least expected! The meal was a grand lay out undoubtedly; but what was even more grand was the energetic 'Sadri' dance by the novices and the church youth thereafter. Our legs still seem to get entangled in those modern dance steps by the youngsters!



We do wish to thank Parag for giving us a helping hand with the food department and for animating the Eucharist. A special thanks to William for animating the evening

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program. A special token of gratitude to Steve for his graceful presence and words of encouragement to Ranjeet. We ask you to keep Ranjeet in your prayers as he moves to Wahrinong for his first mission experience.

Simran Community, Bhopal

POETRY SECTION

Prayer for the canonisation of Blessed Edmund (with apologies to St Paul and the Philippians)

*Have this mind in you
which was in Blessed Edmund
who though rich
did not choose money as the thing to be grasped
But chose love instead
Was emptied
Made desolate
and given the way of the cross.
Until knowing the love of God
which is beyond all knowledge
Was filled with the utter fullness of God*

*Therefore God has exalted him
And given him a name among his beloved
That all may rejoice with him
And give praise to God.*

(Contributed by *Anish John*)

POST-CHAPTER COMMENTS 2022

(Christian Brothers had a Chapter begun and it fractured into two years and two continents.)

Blessed Edmund we hear you. The world you then saw
through that Waterford window still shows a sad scene.





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The whole earth is in trouble - great nations at war,
global heat, holy hatreds, and Covid 19..

We are few, and afraid, but it's us whom you call:

Blessed Edmund, renew us, through *Laudato Si'*.

Blessed Edmund, our voyage, two years round our world
from Peru to Emmaus, was threatened with doom.

But your courage still buoyed us, and gave us new words -
what was fractured we've glued, and warmed contacts by zoom,
(Michael Burke being our pilot when crises occurred,
confronting together elephants in our room!)

We shall journey then Edmund, as brother to you
setting free our hearts' feminine, to heal the world's pain.

We shall strengthen each other, and all that we do
to meld province with province in one clan again.

You dear Edmund, be sainted that all may renew
what a weary world needs, and your spirit may reign.

=====

Through the aeons of time since creation began
and the mystery of love begot all we behold
then did love, call it God, touch each woman, each man,
and reveal through the ages the glories new told -
with the mind-boggling truth of the universe plan
which for us Christian Brothers is bliss to behold.

See the stars see the skies see the seas see the earth
see the millions in search of some ultimate truth
see the few chosen great ones, inspirers from birth,
to enlighten and lead with the daring of youth
where the brave and the graced still reveal life's true worth





to a world caught by words that belie divine proof.

The whole world of CBs after you, Edmund Rice,
follow five leading Brothers, wherever you say..
The world's young are still snared in the tendrils of vice,
but our men will release them, and show them the way.
With Saint Edmund they'll lead us at last then to Christ
to win true joy and peace in an endless new day.

Brendan May 2022

CLASS BREAK

From my room I hear a muted roar,
a hundred voices pour into space
what space has poured into them this morning.
But then a bell swallows all the voices, silence rushes onstage,
and the vacuum has to make do with car-horns and the odd laugh.
Beyond my open door, walls, windows witness humans:
people-prints, culture-prints, learning-prints.
A lone still tree wonders, and waves a little,
would like I imagine to say something to both,
until again a splash of roars sprays the emptiness
and the earlier presentation does a rough encore.
I wonder about my world, my city, my campus,
and how all together beget one another, and
become the earth, the youngsters, and the cosmos
aborning, again and again

Brendan May 2022

