



# INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 9

*Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,*

Greetings from Goa.

The rains are now sporadic and not heavy. Goa has received nearly 107 inches of rain as on 30th September. (This is at the Panjim Observatory)

On the 5th of September we received the sad news that Mrs. Sheila Wallong had passed on. Her son James had spent a few days with us to meet Steve a couple of months ago.

We wish the Principal, Staff and Students of St. Augustine's school, all God's blessings as they celebrate their Golden Jubilee. On the day the school completed 50 years, the school celebrated by having a very meaningful Eucharist with a wonderful boys' choir in attendance, and a beautifully choreographed cultural program. All credit to Anish.

Pope Francis had asked everyone to observe the Season of Creation from 1st September to 3rd of October. A very interesting set of practical questions was published in the Oceania Newsletter and I take the liberty of reproducing it here with a few modifications for local relevance.

"Response to the Cry of Earth - How do I use electricity and water in the home?

Response to the Cry of the Poor - How have I responded to the immediate needs of vulnerable people?

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles - How often do I use heaters, air-conditioners, or my car when alternatives could suffice?

Ecological Education - Have I read Laudato Si'?

Ecological Spirituality - Have I gone outside into nature during my prayer?

Community Resilience & Empowerment - Have I engaged with anyone else in planning for a better environment?"

Bap returned on the 8th of October looking very well and refreshed. Unfortunately after his return his sister suffered a stroke. Please pray for her to recover soon.

Bap has written an article where he reflects on the Ireland of today compared to the time, he left Ireland for the first time to come to India.

Let us pray very specially for all the Brothers and others who are ill. Conrad D'Souza is recovering from an operation to his back. Marcello Vas had a stroke a few days ago and is in Holy Family operation.

Yours fraternally

*Mark*



## ENGAGED CONTEMPLATION

*Author Sophronia Scott draws on the wisdom and example of Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1915–1968) to discern her own response to the world’s pain:*

A hermitage is not where I’m supposed to be. Somehow I sense this. I’m supposed to be saying something, doing something. And yet I feel anything I could offer would get swallowed up in the noise—I’d be an infant crying out into a hurricane. I stand on the edge of an abyss, my hands in my pockets. . . . I feel as though Thomas [Merton] stands next to me in a similar stance. He helps me think about the possibilities. I think he’d say I have to get out there. I have to find a way to serve. He’d definitely say my hermitage idea is wrongheaded.

“The contemplative life is not, and cannot be, a mere withdrawal, a pure negation, a turning of one’s back on the world with its sufferings, its crises, its confusions and its errors,” he writes. “The attempt itself would be illusory. No person can withdraw completely from the society of other people.” When he entered the monastery after months of spiritual struggle, Merton described a lightness, as of . . . a leaving of the world. . . . His writings from his earlier years focused mainly on the cultivation of interior spirituality. . . . But as he matured, both emotionally and spiritually, he too sensed there was more—way more—he could be doing. The world, the very state of it, required that he bring his voice to the table. . . .

In 1961, he wrote his first article on peace, “The Root of War Is Fear,” and laid out the place for Christians in the struggle for peace. He writes, “The duty of Christians in this crisis is to strive with all their power and intelligence, with their faith, hope in Christ, and love for God and humankind, to do the one task which God has imposed upon us in the world today. That task is to work for the total abolition of war.”

In the introduction to Merton’s book *Passion for Peace*, author William H. Shannon writes, “What had happened to him was that his solitude had issued into what all true solitude must eventually become: compassion. . . . This sense of compassion . . . moved him to look once again at the world he thought he had left irrevocably twenty years earlier, in 1941, when he had entered the monastery. He now felt a duty, *precisely because he was a contemplative*, to speak out.”

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*Scott takes consolation from Merton's reflections on contemplative life and the world: I only have to step forward in my own vulnerable, broken, unkind, silly humanity. And I need to keep writing. I feel, as Thomas once did, I've come to a starting point: "The conviction that I have not yet even begun to write, to think, to pray, and to live and that only now I am getting down to waking up."*

## IRELAND, THEN AND NOW

It is 58 years since I left Ireland to join the Indian Province. I have been asked to describe how my country has changed since I left it. The changes are so many that it would take a large book to describe them adequately.

The natural scenery is stunningly beautiful. Every little town and village has a profusion of flowers and shrubs, The Tidy Town competition has had a big hand to play in this. Each year prizes are awarded in different categories to places which have improved their physical features. Locals have been galvanised into action to put down parks and gardens, to dispose of litter daily, to highlight historical monuments, to ensure that houses are artistically painted and that no eyesores exist.



I visited about ten cemeteries to pay respect to departed family members, Brothers and friends. All without exception are beautifully maintained. Graves were easy to access while pathways and lawns were in great shape. The gravestones were clean and fresh flowers often in evidence.



The roads were in first class condition with filling stations, lay bys and restaurants suitably distanced from each other. Unfortunately the roads are conducive to speed so crashes are not infrequent despite the presence of speed-cameras, patrolling Gardai cars and stiff fines for perpetrators. One can drive uninterruptedly between the Republic and Northern Ireland without police or customs checks. There are cycle paths for two-wheelers and the cities boast of bus and taxi lanes. The hedges along country roads are beautifully trimmed,





affording bus passengers in particular a clear view of the Irish countryside, the rivers and seas. Of late special routes for zealous walkers have been developed to rival the Camino de Compostela in Spain. Well informed guides accompany the walkers.

One of the big changes I noticed was the proliferation of non-Irish nationals in the country. Hotel workers, shop assistants, medical personnel seem to be people from Poland, Croatia, India, Africa, China etc. Most towns boast of Chinese and Indian take-aways, and Turkish barbers, There are many Indian nurses - mainly from Kerala - who are very faithful Mass-goers. And at the moment there is a big influx of Ukrainian asylum seekers. Our house in Emmaus has been given over to them as has our house in Synge Street. They occupy hotels which were practically empty because of Covid. In university centres they occupied student accommodation which has caused a huge dilemma. Thousands of students are seeking accommodation, the cost of which has gone through the roof. The average cost is Rs 4000/- a day.

Nearly all Irish young people go on to tertiary level education and that is a huge change. I met old people who eked out a meagre living but whose grandchildren are doctors and other professionals. Education is obviously the key. The people don't recognise the fact that this change was brought about due to the initiatives of people like Edmund Rice and Nano Nagle. The young Irish want better prospects than working in restaurants and shops - hence the presence of so many non-nationals in these posts.

While there are no obvious signs of poverty, I found my home town commercially depressing. Most of the small, family shops are closed, squeezed out of business by the big supermarkets and multi-national stores. The new highways bypass smaller towns, turning them into dormer towns. The beaches were well patronised during the unusually hot summer weather.

I found that the Brothers I met were kindly welcoming, starting with David Gibson who welcomed me warmly to Ireland, assuring me that there was a room (and a lift!)



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available at all times in Marino, and that there was a nurse to render necessary medical assistance, Pat Gaffney and Henry McGann were the only ex-Indian Province Brothers I met, along with Noel Donnelly who is still a CB at heart. Pat Madigan and the other members of the St. Helen's community were gracious hosts. Pat Gaffney was my ever obliging chauffeur who drove me to Mass daily and to visit Brothers with whom I spent years in N. Ireland. John Ledwidge, Dessie Young, Val McGread, Dessie Jennings were in great form, despite serious health problems. All these Brothers are well on in years but their morale is high. They are very well cared for.



There is so much hype and fake news in the media that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. This is particularly true of religious practice, Attendance at daily Mass has dropped but many watch Mass online - a habit developed during Covid lock-down. Along with thousands I attended Mass, the procession and Rosaries on Our Lady's Island on 15th August. Different groups attended daily until the closing date - 8th September. Every week there were busloads going to Knock, Lough Derg and Medjugorje. I attended two Cemetery Sundays where the crowds rivalled those attending Croke Park. Funeral Masses are very well attended also. For Sunday Mass there are fewer young people,



yet Clonard, the Redemptorist church in Belfast, is packed to the gunwales with people of all ages on weekdays. On the flip side, vocations to the priesthood are a rarity. This has become a pressing problem due to an aging clergy. In some dioceses the post of Parish Priest has been scrapped. A few priests live together and cater to the spiritual needs of four or five parishes, alternating morning and evening Masses. Drug abuse, suicides, murders and gang-warfare are ever present

realities.

Yet there is so much goodness and concern for marginalised people. I made no bones of the fact that I was a Christian Brother and I received nothing but respect and admiration.

*Bap Finn*



*Truly Free Truly Alive*





## “The passing on of an outstanding Teacher”

Dear Brothers, this is to inform you that Mrs. Sheila Wallang has passed away. She was a teacher in St. Edmund's School. A wonderful person, quiet, genial and very generous. We remember her sons Rudy, Brian, Jeremy and Keith. Gary passed away recently. May her soul rest in peace.

*Br. S. Morris*

It is with an exceedingly heart that I convey the shattering news that Mrs. Shiela Wallang, who taught many of us in School, has left the mortal world to merge with the Almighty at noon on 5th September '22 in Shillong.

She was one of the most loved and respected School teachers, who went on to establish the Kiddies Corner School in Shillong, which itself has been winning laurel after laurel under her Principalship. 'Miss' Wallang will be missed, not only by us Seppans but a very large section of Society.

We pay our respects to her, with our eyes moist with gratitude for playing a vital part in forming the lives of many of us, and offer our deepest condolences to her sons Seppans Rudy, Keith and Brian Wallang and all family members.

May the Lord give them the strength of coping with this grievous loss and May He Grant her Eternal Rest.

*Ramesh Bawri*



(L to R) Brian Wallang, Ramesh Bawri, Brendan Mac, Sheelah, Bob and Mary Morehead)

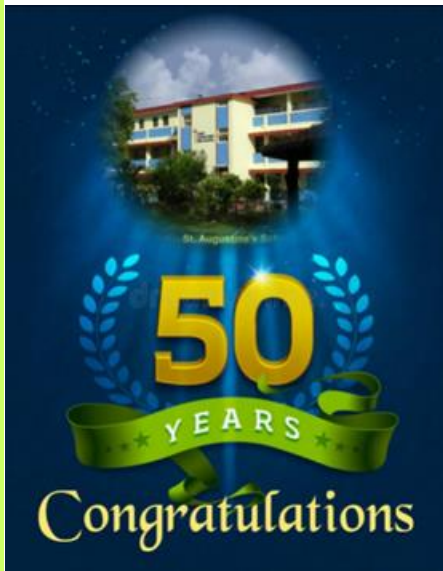
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# Inauguration of Golden Jubilee celebrations

## St. Augustine's, Vasai





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## ONE BOOK, ONE PEN , ONE CHILD ONE TEACHER CAN CHANGE THE WORLD



This year on Teachers day, a very creative and innovative video was conceptualised by Vikram Gupta, the Chairman of Ivy Capital, a well know Venture Capital Company.

What was specially innovative about the video was that besides a group of very successful people paying tributes to their teachers, the video also highlighted the fact that these people took the change that transferred their lives forward in most unique ways.

Among the mentors of these successful people was Br. Steve D'Souza, who mentored Jeet Kalra, who is now the founder and CEO of MakeMyTrip .com.

In the Video, Jeet say that Br. Eric was the person responsible for including Computers as a regular subject at the ICSE exams. He taught them to write programs long before other schools had

even entertained the idea.





Jeet is taking the change forward by being one of the founders of Ashoka University, a philanthropy driven Private University located in the National Capital Region and actively helping young entrepreneurs.

Among the prominent persons mentioned in the video is Shikar Dhawan, who gives all the credit to his cricket coach who persevered with Shikar from a very young age. Shikar now runs a foundation to educate children who are economically disadvantaged.

The video is dedicated to all teachers and the love of Teaching and can be found on YouTube by searching for: Happy Teachers Day.

### Br. Slattery Memorial Football Tournament

Regina Mundi organised the 24<sup>th</sup> All Goa Bro. D.O. Slattery Memorial Inter-school tournament football tournament for Boys and Girls Under 13.

The tournament has been recognised by the Goa football Association and backed by the Vasco Sports Club.

Quoting the Newspaper - Herald- "The tournament is held in memory of the late Br. Slattery who was a much loved and former brother, teacher of the school who the legend says used to referee football games at RMS even at the age of 70. He passed on his passion for football and love for sports to all students he taught."



Four teams took part in the Girls tournament and the RMS girls won the tournament beating St. Jude's High School, Betalbatin by 2 goals to Nil. The girl's tournament was introduced for the first time to promote the girl child.



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In the boy's tournament, 16 teams took part. Regina Mundi lost in the second round to the eventual runners up. Loyola High School, Margao, beat Perpetual Succour Convent School, Navelim by 4 goals to 2 to claim the boy's trophy. St. Britto's, Mapusa, clinched the third place.



## VOCATION PROMOTION IN TAMIL NADU

From 23 August to 31 August, I enjoyed the hospitality and brotherhood of the De Le Salle Brothers in different parts of Tamil Nādu. Last September 2021 I was here but was not able to move due to my shoulder injury, so this time I was able to make the best of my time. Br. T. Amalan, the Provincial of the brothers in India made all the necessary arrangements for my stay in different communities. The Brothers have their schools, houses of formation and communities in Madurai, Dindigul and Tuticorin.

In Madurai, I stayed at the Boys Town. Here they have two communities; the Provincialate community and the Pre-novitiate community. There are three young men from Tamil Nādu in the Pre-novitiate and one full time brother looking after them. A number of brothers visit them and stay with them to take different modules and sessions. During my stay here, I took a few sessions on Spoken English for the three Postulants. It was wonderful to visit their houses of formation in Madurai, Mangalagiri and Tuticorin. They have their senior, well experienced and best brothers in their houses of formation. On one Sunday, I attended the first profession of Br. Mark Tony at Suranam, one after ten years.

While my stay with the brothers, I was able to interact with a number of senior students from both Tamil as well as English medium schools. In the Tamil medium schools, one of the brothers was the Translator. Language can be a barrier; nevertheless, the students are like the rest in the country with many interesting questions. The following table will give a clear picture of the schools and the students attended the sessions.





S.NO.	NAME OF THE SCHOOL/PLACE	ATTENDED	FURTHER CONTACT
1	ST. MARY'S HIGHER SEC. SCHOOL/MADURAI	60	15
2	ST. JOSEPH'S H. SEC. SCHOOL/ KEELAMUDIMAN	09	09
3	LA SALLES H. SEC. SCHOOL/TUTICORIN	66	18
4	ST. JOSEPH'S H. SEC. SCHOOL/MANGALAGIRI	20	02
5	PRESENTATION CONVENT KODAIKANAL	31	10

During my weekend, I visited the Presentation Sisters in Kodaikanal and interacted with their senior students in two of their schools. Sr. Stella Arul was very kind to agree to do the translation to the students from Tamil Medium students. The sisters went all out not only to make my stay comfortable but also were very supportive in promoting CB vocation in their schools.

I am grateful to the De La Salle Brothers, the Holy Cross Brothers and the Presentation Sisters for their hospitality and support given to me while my stay in their communities. All the brothers and sisters were very kind, helpful and supportive towards my Vocation Promotion work in their schools.



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## An update on Ukraine Refugees in Emmaus and Synge Street

The extra refugees imposed on Emmaus have caused some problems. (The high daily intake into Ireland of refugees from the Ukraine continues). In Emmaus they have had to bring in extra portable toilets and the lecture halls have been turned into 20-bed open dormitories.

Synge St House (thirteen bedrooms) has been turned over to the government for refugees and will be occupied by the end of the month. It is in an excellent inner-city location, so people there will have quick access to jobs in the city and it will suit young families also. The former chapel and community and dining rooms make excellent meeting rooms for the families and the kids.



(Two pupils of the attached Synge St. CBS, have just won first prize in the annual European Students' Scientific Awards competition for schools. They presented a solution to a mathematical conundrum that has been unsolved since it was discovered in the 17th century). Both arrived as immigrants from Africa as children and are now Irish citizens.

So many of our traditional inner city schools, which once catered for people of the poor districts of Dublin, have now become well-known as havens for young immigrants from Africa, central Europe and Asia. Not all schools have been willing to take up that burden. I think Edmund Rice would be proud!

*John Ledwidge*





## POETRY SECTION

### THE CAT'S TALE

That I am insignificant is simply so.  
I live today, I die tomorrow. Who'll know?  
What if they do or don't – will anyone care?  
Another ant, or buttercup: what? where?

Begin with 'once upon a time' – now see  
Eyes will focus, ears perk: this could be me  
Who'll live and die (me too!), but on the way  
Non-people do non-things – and make my day!

Night blanks, day clears, traffic has noise to blare.  
That doesn't provoke our wondering when-where.  
But let this girl, this guy, even a local cat  
Be named and famed – all other facts fall flat.

It has to do with love, with life, with hope.  
Inside our souls lurks fear that we can't cope.  
Day drags and bores, we're nobody at heart.  
But tales transform! This is the role of art.

*Brendan*



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## THE GROUP

Streets shops malls, lanes and upstairs spots –  
Do you remember? – flecked with names and labels,  
Even colours, dishes, and favourite waiters:  
The then-and-now conversations of old friends.

This was an earlier world a-borning, old homes shaping,  
This was the where and when of life-being-lived.  
Epics detailed around who and even where and why,  
Moments recollected, celebrated, regretted – over.

A story sketched to few now detailed to all,  
A memory shared by all now given fresh telling.  
The heroines and heroes of fields now bricked and paved  
Sadly resurrected, their end unwillingly acknowledged.

Those world-wide clusters shared ten million memories.  
Hates few now, loves and regrets dressed in worn robes.  
People heading home, perhaps now understanding  
That life was this, and each was webbed to all.

*Brendan September 2022*

