



INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa where the weather is nice and cool while other parts of the country are experiencing temperatures that are near freezing.

During this month the church experienced the passing of two leaders-Pope Benedict XVI(31st. December) and Cardinal George Pell (10th.January) Both were conservative in their outlook and critical of Pope Francis. However they were both very committed and worked hard for what they saw as the well-being of the church.

On the 26th of January the country celebrated its 74th republic day. A very impressive display of technological progress was put up by the armed forces and colourful cultural items were put up by the various states. The country has a new very impressive parliament building soon to be inaugurated. India will in a few years be the third largest economy in the world.

But there are some very alarming indicators. Millions of people are without jobs. The gap between the rich and the poor seems to get wider. Corruption has not in any way decreased. Politicians change sides to further their own interests. The rise in the prices of essential commodities is a concern even for the Reserve Bank. Democratic structures are getting weaker.

One hopes that the political leaders of our country have a change of heart and work for the good of the country rather than only seek to win elections at any cost.

Included in this newsletter is an article by a journalist on the "Shepherd of Bassein" – Br. Christy Murphy. Christy was an amazingly talented and compassionate Brother.

During the month, our community was happy to host Tom, Joel and Senan. We wish them well on their travels.

Yours fraternally.

Mark



BOREDOM – A FAULT WITHIN OURSELVES

Bieke Vandekerckhove wrote a book *“A Taste of Silence”*, which chronicles her own struggles after being diagnosed at age nineteen with ALS.

ALS is commonly called Lou Gehrig’s disease. It is a degenerative neurological condition that results in a massive debilitation of one’s body and almost always results in death not long afterwards. Not an easy diagnosis for a vibrant young woman to accept.

After a deep, initial depression, she found meaning in her life through meditation, silence, literature, art, poetry, and, not least, through a relationship that eventually led to marriage. Unexpectedly, her disease went into remission, and she lived for another twenty years. Among the many rich insights she shares, she offers an interesting reflection on boredom.

Discussing the prevalence of boredom today, Vandekerckhove highlights an irony, namely, that boredom is increasing among us even as we are daily producing every kind of gadget to help us avoid it. Given that today we carry in our hands technological devices that link us to everything from the world news of the day to photos of our loved ones playing with their children, shouldn’t we be insulated against boredom?

Ironically, the opposite seems true. All those technological gadgets are not alleviating our boredom. We still wrestle with boredom because all the stimulation in the world doesn’t necessarily make for meaning. Meaning and happiness, she suggests, do not consist so much in meeting interesting people, and being exposed to interesting things; rather they consist in taking a deeper interest in people and things.

We tend to suffer boredom because it’s here that we tend to not be deeply inside the reality of the people and events with whom and with which we are interacting. It’s here that we often feel life as flat, dull, and routine. But, at the end of the day, we wrestle with boredom not because our families, workplaces, colleagues, neighbors, churches, and friends aren’t interesting. We’re bored because we’re too internally impoverished, distracted, or self-centered to take a genuine interest in them.

Finding life interesting isn’t dependent upon where you are and who you meet but rather on your own capacity to see deeply into things. Life everywhere is rich enough to be interesting; but we, on our part, have to be interested.

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



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REMEMBERING BROTHER MURPHY

(Dec 26, 2022)|

What made me write about Brother Murphy?

It happened sometime in August 1983. I travelled to work each morning by auto or bus from my residence in Holi to catch the local to Bombay and as we drove past St Augustine's, I noticed how Brother Murphy guided children to cross the road to safely reach the school gate. Several questions would pop up in my mind – *who exactly was this foreign missionary?*

– did he genuinely love and care for our Indian children or was he putting on a show to impress?

– what were his thoughts on education and the best way to teach children, because as a child I experienced nightmares regarding mathematics, Hindi, and Kannada.

The writer in me could hardly let go of these questions without securing answers. There was also the selfish motive of being the first to write about the school and the Irish brother in a mainstream newspaper like Midday (edited by the legendary Behram Contractor, aka Busybee).

It was only after the publication of the article that I learned it created a far more significant impact: a great number of people, and it must have included those associated with the educational system, got exposed to Brother Murphy's wonderful thoughts. How else could one explain the outpouring of support and admiration that Midday received in the following weeks?

Witness these letters to the editor:

"If schools in Bombay had more principals like Brother Murphy in Bassein, what a change for the better for our children." – wrote MS Dalvi, of Colaba, Bombay.

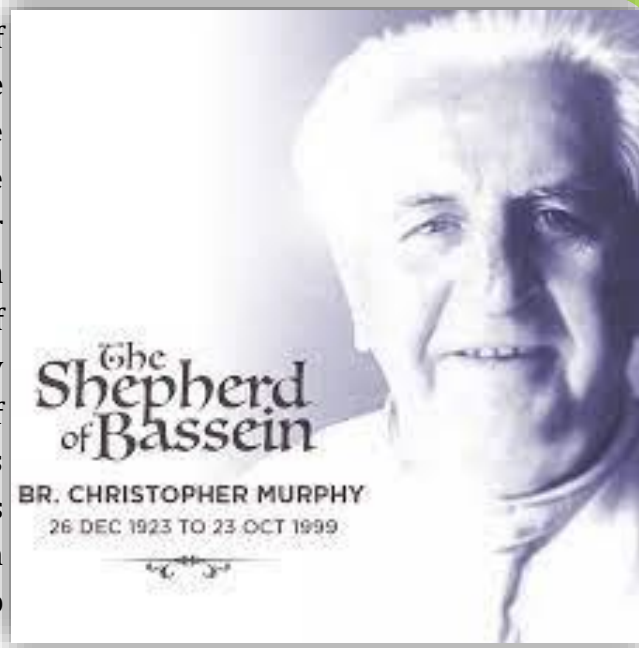
PS Badde of Sangli wrote: "It was a pleasure to read about the Irish shepherd and his flock. The article brought back so many memories of my own school days. These days everything is subjugated to examination marks. How many schools even think in terms of exploiting the environment? In the words of Tagore, "the mind's health can't be maintained on a ration of books served up in motionless classes within the prison walls of static schools."

Michael De Souza of Umerkhadi in Bombay said, "In my opinion, Brother Murphy is a fine example of what would be described today as a "Jesus person"; in the dozen or so years he has spent in Bassein, he has spread his love and affection around like the fragrance of a flower. Neither the students of his school nor the members of his community are likely to forget him. He is a good man indeed and a fine example to diocesan priests who know nothing of obedience, fill their pockets with money and only preach without practicing."





Then there was Austin Pereira of Bassein itself who said, "The article was a smack in the face off those principals in Bombay schools who have gone commercial in a big way. Brother Murphy's school is one of the best in Bassein with a high standard of education and discipline as well as very good examination results. A couple of years ago, a student of the school was knocked down and killed by an ST Bus as he tried to cross the road. Since then Brother Murphy stands outside to help his "children".



Husain Beguwala of Bombay wrote: "It was very heartening and comforting to learn that dedicated educators like Brother Murphy still exist. Think of him standing outside the gates to greet every child as he comes in. May God give him a long life and plenty of the love he spreads around so liberally."

Sunday Mid-Day. September 18, 1983.

Jason Pereira of Dadar, Bombay, opined: "The interview by Ramesh Avadhani clearly showed Brother Murphy of the Bassein school as a man filled with love for his fellow humans, as a humanitarian who upholds Christian principles to the highest. These in fact are the main attributes of the Irish Christian Brothers who run many schools in this country. No wonder parents make a beeline for them and do their utmost to get their wards admitted. The interview also showed the success of the Montessori system which allows children to learn through discovery. Teachers should be guides rather than instructors and ranks and penalties should not be used."

I will reproduce one last letter, this from Olencio de Souza of Dahisar, Bombay: "It was with much interest that I read Ramesh Avadhani's piece on Brother Murphy. I had always wanted to know the reason for the popularity of St Augustine's High School at Bassein and now that reason has been supplied. The Christian Brothers' order is synonymous with liberal education and Brother Murphy has rightly stated that they prefer to keep a low profile. What really impressed me was the reason for the system of gradation they use to estimate the progress of students. I am sure more schools in Bombay would benefit from a few of his pointers."

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As I read these letters after nearly forty years, I feel privileged that I got the opportunity to write about the Irish Brother. We live in a world where goodness is hard to come by, but when it does come, it makes great sense and delight to stop and admire that goodness and talk about it, hoping that it will touch and influence us and others.

Ramesh Avadhani

St. Vincent's High & Technical School, Asansol.

ANNUAL SPORTS MEET 2022

"Sport brings out our true mettle
Teaches us to face life's battle
Sport is the key to self reliance
Teaches us to accept mistakes without defiance.

Sport improves our competence.

Teaches us to aim for top level brilliance. Sport illuminates team spirit
Teaches us to inculcate this noble habit"

A school sports day is a red-letter day on the school calendar. It is a day when students are freed from the fetters of classroom learning, to jump and run around. It is a day for proud mothers and fathers to cheer their sons and daughters. It's a day for red faces and perspiration, a day for lots of action and beaming faces, a day for victories and defeats, for successes and failures.

Beyond the obvious health and activity benefits, sport can teach us much about life. It teaches us about teamwork and team spirit, the coordination and synchronisation, compassion and empathy, sportsmanship and camaraderie. Its all about trust and responsibility, about dealing with success and failures and working together to achieve a common goal. After an interlude of over 2 years due to the covid pandemic, St. Vincent's High and Technical School celebrated its Annual Sports Day with enthusiasm, passion, vigor and of course oodles of power, self confidence and winning spirit on 10December 2022.

This 83rd annual athletic meet and drill display 2022 was graced by our honorable chief guest Mrs Jinny George, principal of





Loreto Convent, Asansol, Rev Br. Walter Vaz, our community leader, Br. Sunil Lobo, head of the technical department, principals of various schools, alumni members, parents and other distinguished invitees.

The bright sunny morning kick started with the hoisting of the flag by our chief guest, Ma'am George, accompanied by our principal, Mr. Ravi Victor. With the sounding of the bugle, The March past began, led by Krish Sharma, the school head boy carrying the Christian brothers' flag and Manasvi Santoria, the school head girl carrying the school flag. Accompanying them were the deputy head boy, Devansh Maheshwari and deputy head girl Prisha Agarwal. They were followed by the SVTS Brass band, FAME and the banner with the self proclaimed mantra to success "DO NOT WAIT FOREVER, IT IS NOW OR NEVER, WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER. This was also the common theme weaving through the entire fabric of the sports event. The four houses led by their house captains, marched past the dais in unison to the beats in all their magnificence and grandeur as they saluted the chief guest. They were followed by the ex-students' squad brimming with pride and nostalgia. The torch was lighted, oath taken and the sports meet was declared open by our chief guest, thus spreading positive energy and adding to the heat of excitement. The Brass band incorporated girls for the first time in the group thus embodying the ideology of gender equality which has always been championed by SVTS. The band came forth with signature moves, bringing out the school motto, Consilio Et Animo - Consider Wisely, Act with Courage. This was followed by a variety of athletic events. The crowd cheered for all the participants motivating them to give their best not only for their own sake but also for the sake of the houses that they represented. There were not only the athletic events in the sports meet, but also drill displays. All the drills resonated the common theme of : "Alone we are strong, together we are stronger. And when we are together, can there be anything better?"

Class 5's depicted The Rejuvenation of Nature when nature bloomed amidst pandemic. The class 6's emphasized that no matter how vast the darkness, we must hold on to faith and hope and find our own silver lining. Class 7's emphasized that being fit was the only means to strengthen our entire immune system and put a positive impact on our



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body after the negative covid. Class 8's saluted the efforts of all the people who came together in solidarity as one nation to fight against the pandemic and accentuated that together we can overcome any crisis. Class 9's stressed on yoga as a means of total and effective control of body and mind to surpass all grief and stress. They formed pyramids to depict the arch of unity and the cycle to send out a message that no matter how time changes or situations change we can overcome any adversity if we are all united together. Class 11's saluted the 'Sentinels of the Soil' as they took a moment to say 'thank you' to the frontline warriors specially doctors, nurses, healthcare workers and the police who pitched in to alleviate the sufferings of the fellow human beings at great personal risk and cost. Last but not the least was the mass drill, a grandiose amalgamation of synchronisation, rhythm and teamwork. This was a wonderful sight as the entire School came onto the field, performing in sync, once again accentuating the theme of unity and strength.

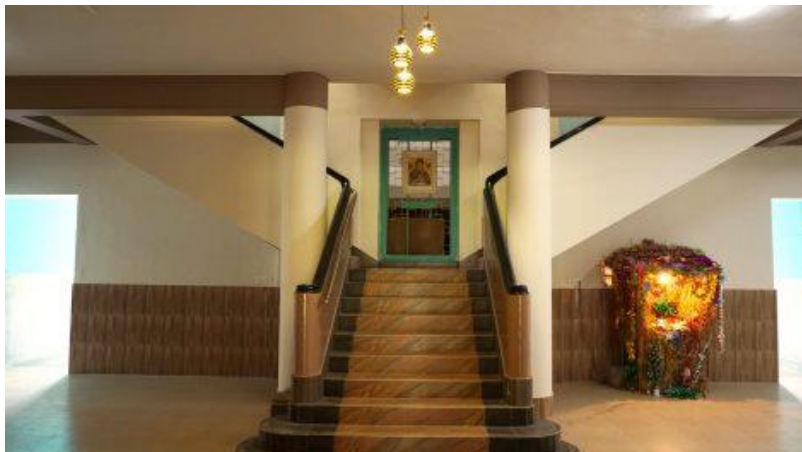


During the prize distribution ceremony individual winners were awarded for their meritorious performance.

This magnum event concluded with the golden words of the honorable chief guest Mrs. Jinny George and the declaration of the overall champion house which was an icing on the cake. St. John's House was declared as the winner of the March past, who also bagged The Championship Trophy. They proved that - every champion was once a contender that refused to give up. The event was declared closed with the lowering of the flag.

“It takes a dream to get started, desire to keep going and determination to finish.”

Mrs. J. Sabharwal





“Go for it” Meet, 5th January to 8th January

Edmund Rice Center, Bogmalo, Goa



(Larry Miranda, Sabino D’Souza, Charlie D’Souza, Placid Henriques, Willie D’Souza, Raj Noronha, Jerome Manual, Tino D’Abreo) Center Seated: Avinash D’Mello

Our Candidates spend 10 days in the Bow

A ten days program was conducted for our candidates at St. Mary's Orphanage and Day School. The purpose of the program was to bring the candidates to Kolkata, to give them a taste of the City of Joy, to interact with the Brothers in Kolkata and to continue the learning of English.

Our Candidates at present in SMO, DumDum:

(L-R) Sebrent Kerketta, Perdik Barla, Kitboklang Kurbah, Goodwin Hansa, Blestar Kurbah, Nishant Lakra, Donald Khyllait and Tenborlang Kurbah.



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The candidates arrived at SMO on 10 January 2023 from Meghalaya, Assam, Jharkhand and Odisha, after their Christmas vacation. The four Khasi boys enjoyed their first train journey from Guwahati to Howrah. They were met by Br. Jayanti at Howrah Railway Station and were taken to SMO. For two days Jayanti on his own looked after the candidates and i joined them on 12 January. The candidates interacted with the brothers in St. Joseph's College, St. George's School, Bow Bazaar and St. Mary's Orphanage and Day School Dum Dum Kolkata. They interacted with the teachers and students of Mary Rice Center.



They had classes in English language, Self esteem and Bible study. They had regular games of football and basketball. They also prayed in the morning, evening and recited the daily Rosary. They were fortunate to take part in the Platinum Jubilee Eucharistic celebration on 16 January in St. Mary's School Chapel. They enacted the story of the three Wise Men and were trained in public speaking and learned a few new hymns from the Edmund Rice Hymnal.

They cleaned and arranged the community libraries in Bow Bazaar and SMO. The candidates visited the tomb of St. Teresa of Kolkata and did shopping in town. After ten days stay at SMO they travelled back to Shillong on their own by train and by road. The Brothers at SMO were very happy with the presence of the eight candidates.



William D'Souza CFC





The Blessing of the New Edmund Rice Block in St. Patricks School on 24th January, 2023



Edmund Rice Block

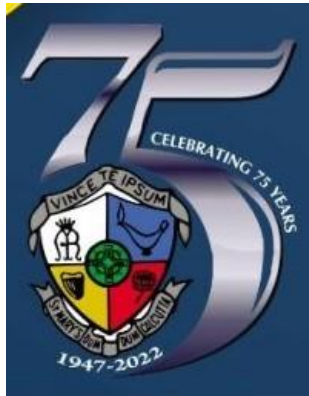


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ST. MARY'S PLATINUM JUBILEE, JANUARY 2023



Welcome SMO Family Members to the Platinum Jubilee Celebration of Our beloved School, The Place Where We Built Ourselves.



The Archbishop of Kolkata- Thomas D'Souza with the P.L.T., Principal of St. Mary's- Mrs. Nandita Bhattacharya and other Brothers and Priests of the Diocese





Standing (L to R) Charles D'Souza, Sunil Britto, James Joseph, Cedric Andrade, Steve Fernandes, Michelle Crouch, Kevin Ward, Sabino D'Souza, Ruvan Rebello

Sitting: Placid Henriques, William D'Souza, Joe Johnson, Jerry Crouch, Bob Beddoe, Lawrence Colaco

POETRY SECTION

I HEARD A BIRD

Answering a sick call this morning
 I heard a bird who sang
 and seemed to say there is no dying,
 her tender treble telling
 whoever chose to listen
 that her eggs had hatched and
 she must feed her chicks, all beaks,
 into fullness.

I went my way, my prayers and holy oils
 seeming suddenly, thanks to a bird,
 to tell
 more of life than death.

Kevin Ward

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BIRDSONG

Yesterday morning a bird
 fluttered to a tree near my window
 and without a by-your-leave
 (I was busy with my teeth-brushing)
 lifted its voice in Lauds.

In chorus it said
 or seemed to say
 'Come!' Very peremptory mind you!
 And I said 'Where?' leaving my brush and all
 and drawing closer.

My bird, caught up so in its psalmody, ignored me
 yet I sensed where I had to go.
 There was a summons, I thought
 from the woods across the valley. I went
 wondering if the trees desired to see my shining teeth.
 They didn't.

'The bird sent you?' queried a great evergreen.
 White teeth forgotten, I had no answer,
 only questions –
 the why of love and suffering and trees and birdsong and ...

'Embrace me!' said the tree, surprising me. I did,
 shyly.

'Do you still have questions?' whispered the tree
 as I still hugged.
 'Yes', I sighed and added, 'but the answers
 do not seem to matter any more.'

Kevin Ward

MYSTERIOUS ME

The title says it adequately.

It's easy, no? All you have to do is:
 What doesn't fit, exclude. Deny. Ignore,
 And thus make simple all that's gone before
 As illegitimate – mere mysteries.

I wonder does the chrysalis, now butterfly,
 Recover from the beauty of her wings,





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Or what before she shared with earthy things
But now can frolic while earth lumbers by.

I wonder too at things we folks can do,
And make of wood and bricks houses to live,
And grow to store and willingly to give
Where formerly they chained us in their zoo!

But most I wonder at my wonderings.

I live inside my skin. But everywhere
My mind transports me, so my simple lair
Is cosmic home to life's meanderings.

The million truths I do not understand
Beyond mere space and time and history
Are now my playground. Cosmic mystery
Welcomes us all in love to God's own land.

Brendan January 2023

NONE, BRUTUS, NONE

Creativity is a wordless lie

Words – wait! No. You are gone – no, fled, just
when I am matching you desperately to my racing brain.
Brain? Never. Much too slow for all I've been experiencing,
like finding my hands in a racing torrent full of treasures –
but gone as soon as identified! I am in a birth-canal –
but was that I? Or a previous? Or – wait – this one
whisked past. My racing self clings on to this word, but
there, it's gone, and I can't settle for the tools of language,
all scribbles and lines and dots and spaces
just to become what is now long fled. I am wordless,
meaningless. Language, your every stroke is a head-
stone.

Brendan January 2023

