



# INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

*Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,*

October promised to be an eventful month for the world.

On the 4th of October, which is National Brotherhood day and the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis brought out a new Document-Laudate Diem. It is not an encyclical but nonetheless a very important document to remind the world of our need to look after the planet earth. Eight years have passed since Laudate Si was presented to the world and the Pope is more than worried that not much has been done in the vital area of addressing the adverse effects of the climate crisis. To quote Pope Francis we will “increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc”

On the 2nd of October, the well known Dominican- Timothy Radcliff gave a series of reflections to the delegates of the Synod on Synodality. He summed up what he thinks are the feelings of the delegates as they begin the synod, 'Let us begin by praying that the Lord will free our hearts from fear. For some, this is the fear of change. For others, the fear that not much will change.' For the senior cardinals in the church the fact that lay people are attending is an affront on their position as senior members (princes) of a hierarchical church. In contrast, Fr. Radcliff reminds us and all the members of the synod that ‘we are mendicants on a journey’

The first session of the synod has ended. Let us hope and pray that the session in 2024 is able to address the issues that have not been dealt with so far.

On the 50th Anniversary of the Yom Kippur war, Hamas made a surprise, daring attack on Israeli townships in many parts of Israel. Israel is now hitting back by bombing the Gaza strip out of existence. But even when this so called war ends the Palestinian problem will not be solved. One would have thought that the holocaust would not ever happen again. But it has and the earlier victims are now the perpetrators. The UN Secretary General is the only world leader who has been able to speak on behalf of those who are suffering. Let us hope and pray that saner councils will prevail and that peace be restored in many parts of our troubled world.

Yours fraternally.

*Mark*



## TEN TENSIONS TO CARRY

The thought of some of the greatest and most influential persons in history seems, at times, riddled with inconsistencies. Jesus, Augustine, Socrates, Aristotle, among others, appear at times to contradicting themselves. It's not always easy to see how everything squares with everything else in their teachings.

That's why the great religions and philosophies of the world are so prone to multiple interpretations. For example, given the depth and scope of Jesus' teaching, Christianity is particularly open to different kinds of understanding. It's no accident that there are hundreds of denominations within Christianity and every variation of spirituality and worship inside of these. The teaching is so rich that none of us, the disciples, it would seem, can carry it off as did the master. We each pick our parts selectively, end up consistent, but also much narrower than the master.

Consistency, someone once quipped, is the product of a small mind, just as inconsistency is the mark of a great one. There's a truth in that, though it must be carefully understood. For instance, sometimes we achieve a certain consistency, a view of things that holds together and has no contradictions within it, but at a high price, namely, we end up too narrow, too non-inclusive, too one-sided, impoverished, reductionistic. Racism, bigotry, fundamentalism, anarchy, and wantonness are, whatever else, consistent. But their consistency is based upon a fragile synthesis, too narrowly drawn, that eventually suffocates important areas of life.

Conversely, sometimes what looks like inconsistency is really a person holding together a number of important truths in a higher synthesis. She may look inconsistent, but what she is really doing is holding and juggling a number of different truths in a creative tension. The person who tries this juggling act, and it is a juggling act, will often find herself in great tension, but, she will also find that she has no blocked arteries and very resilient lungs, that blood flows freely to every part of her person and she is able draw life-giving oxygen from whatever kind of air she finds around her.

Jesus was like that. He held so many great truths together in one synthesis that he was misunderstood by just about everyone and he scandalized persons on both sides of the ideological spectrum. In his teaching, it's more "both/and" than "either/or". We struggle with that. It's easier to carry one truth or another than try to carry them all.

What are some of the great truths that Jesus carried in tension that we tend to reduce too easily? Allow me to name ten of these, chosen precisely because a healthy



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spirituality must always carry both ends of these:

1. A strong sense of individuality, a focus on private integrity and private prayer – coupled with an equally strong commitment to community, family, civic and ecclesial involvement, and social justice.
2. A healthy capacity to drink in life and enjoy it without guilt – but one that befriends an equally healthy capacity for asceticism, selflessness, and discipline.
3. A healthy development of the individual gifts that God has given us, a healthy self-assertion, complete with a certain healthy exhibitionism – held always in tension with a healthy sense of duty, a capacity for obedience, and an habitual self-effacement.
4. An itch for the prophetic, an eye and a sympathy for what lies outside the centre, for what is marginalized, a challenging voice for the excluded – even as one recognizes the importance of the institutional, defends against anarchy, and helps nurture what's sacred within family, church, and tradition.
5. A perpetual openness to what's new, what's strange, what causes discomfort, to what's liberal – even as one works to ground oneself and others in the familiar, in routine, in what conserves, gives rhythm, and makes for family and stability.
6. A eye and a love for the sacred, for God, for the other-world, for the eternal horizon – coupled with an unabashed love for this world, for its joys, for its achievements, its present moment.
7. A passion for sexuality and a defense of its goodness – coupled with an equally strong defense of purity and chastity.
8. An eye for world-community, for stretching all the boundaries we were born into, for an ever-widening hospitality – even as one is deeply loyal to family, personal roots, and the fact that hospitality begins at home.
9. An idealism and a hope that defies the facts, that relies on God's promises and does not let the deep, inchoate desires of the human heart be deflected by the accidents of history – held together with a realism that is pragmatic, programmatic, and doing its share of the work.
10. A focus on the next-life, on life after death, on the fact that our lives here are but a short time in expectation of something else – even as we focus on the reality and goodness of life after birth, this life, its importance.





Jesus held all of these as one, playing every kind of tune and breathing every kind of air, both human and divine.

*Ronald Rolheiser*

## VOCATION PROMOTER'S REPORT IN THE FIRST QUARTER SOWING THE SEED

The first quarter of our Vocation Promotion program, known as the SOWING OF THE SEED, began on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and ended on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. I visited all the Christian Brothers' institutions from North to South of India and also other Parishes and Parish schools as well in various places. In total I interacted with about 900plus students during this Sowing of Seed stage.

In certain schools, I interacted with all the Christian students of the schools and in other students from Classes six to twelve. This year I have followed a different method of interaction; in place of the usual PPT, we had discussions and a lot of group work. We discussed on three important questions, namely, "Who am I", my identity; "Who is God to me", God's identity and "Who/What is a Christian Brother?" Interesting discussions, a lot of difficult questions were raised and clarified.

Apart from our own institutions, interactions with catholic students were done in Parishes and Parish Schools. The interaction here was satisfactory too.

There were many challenges that I faced while my visit to schools, to name a few, lack of interest in our catholic students on "Spiritual" talk, their main focus is on career our profession! In a softer note, many of them have already decided either to remain single or get married if they have to choose a VOCATION later on in life!!!!

The second quarter of the program will commence from the mid of October till the end of December, this is known as the NURTURING stage and final quarter known as the HARVESTING stage from March 2024 to May 2024.

I take the opportunity to thank the many people who have encouraged me and supported me in my privileged journey of Vocation Promotion. In a special way I offer my deep gratitude to all our Community Leaders and Principals of our Schools. Your support, trust and confidence never cease to inspire and sustain me in my ministry. God Bless you all.



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**SOWING THE SEEDS 2023**

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| ST. AUGUSTINE SCHOOL VASAI      | 219        |
| NAZARETH SCHOOL VASAI           | 55         |
| ST. COLUMBA'S SCHOOL NEW DELHI  | 346        |
| ST. MARY'S SCHOOL MOUNT ABU     | 20         |
| ST. ANN'S CHURCH MOUNT ABU      | 38         |
| ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL CHANDIGARH    | 63         |
| ST. ANN'S CONVENT CHANDIGARH    | 37         |
| ST. JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL BAJPE  | 28         |
| ST. JOSEPH'S P.U. COLLEGE BAJPE | 20         |
| BETHANY CONVENT SCHOOL BAJPE    | 14         |
| REGINA MUNDI SCHOOL CHICALIM    | 109        |
| ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE NAINITAL   | 12         |
| <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b> | <b>961</b> |

**NO. OF STUDENTS INTERACTED**

|            |
|------------|
| 219        |
| 55         |
| 346        |
| 20         |
| 38         |
| 63         |
| 37         |
| 28         |
| 20         |
| 14         |
| 109        |
| 12         |
| <b>961</b> |





## VOCATION PROMOTION JULY- SEPTEMBER

### conducted by Jayant Chauhan

#### July 2023

**1. St. Georges Free School (6/7/2023)** 6<sup>th</sup> July met the St. Georges Catholic Students first time and had a session on Vocation and the work of Brothers.

There were total 9 catholic Students from Class 5- NIOS.

**2. St. Mary's Orphanage and Day School (12/7/2023)** I had an interaction with 49 Catholic Students of Our School on Divine Calls and something on prayer.

**3. Goethals School Kurseong (27/7/2023)** Met 3 boys and gave them a general talk on vocation.

#### August 2023

**4. St. Patrick School Asansol (16/8/2023)** Met 29 catholic Students of Our School from Std 8-12 in the School Auditorium and gave them a session on Vocations and the Call of Blessed Edmund.

**5. St. Vincent School Asansol (17/8/2023)** Met 25 Catholic Students of Our School in the School Mini Hall. Had a session on Vocation and The Life of Blessed Edmund and his Call.

**6. St. Joseph Hindi Medium School Asansol (17/8/2023)** I had interaction with 10 catholic boys of this school from class 8-12 and basically all are interested to know more about the religious life.



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## September 2023

- 7. Edmund Rice Mankara School Wahrinong (19/9/2023)** On 19<sup>th</sup> after the assembly of the school I had a brief interaction with 46 students of the Class 8-9 of Our school and encouraged them to join us as a brother and shared the work of brothers in India and across the world.
- 8. St. Edmund's College (20/9/2023)** Had 30 min interaction with the Degree students of our college. They were 14 of them. It was a basic talk on Listening for God and Be available to God when he calls.
- 9. St. Edmund Higher Secondary School Shillong (21/9/2023)** 24 students were present for the Vocation session of the Higher secondary school.
- 9. St. Edmund School (21/9/2023)** Met 61 catholic students of Class 9 &10 of St. Edmund School. Had an hour of interaction on God's Calls, Prayer, and Listening for God.
- 10. The Divine Saviour School Shillong (25/9/2023)** I had an interaction with 300 catholic students (Boys and Girls) in the Bianchi Hall. It was a talk on God's Call, Various type of Vocations and showed them the Power Point on Edmund's Call.
- 11. The Little Flower School Malki Shillong (25/9/2023)** Had a session with 33 Catholic Students on God's Call and the important of Prayer and Silence in our life.

## CONGRATULATIONS PLACID



Congratulations, Placid, on receiving the Religious Brother of the year from the East Indian Community Association. The Association honours members of the community who have played a significant role in society. It also runs many projects to help marginalised sections of society.





# TUTTI FRATELLI

From 9<sup>th</sup> September to 7 October, I attended a Program called Tutti Fratelli (All Brothers) organized by Intercongregational Team of Religious Brothers for religious brothers across different congregations. The Tutti Fratelli program's main aim is to provide an opportunity for brothers across religious congregations to share experiences on how to journey with those in formation and temporary professed Brothers, in order to foster growth and help them to discover deeper meaning in their lives. However, to me the result was more of personal growth/transformation. The program has brought together more than 45 Brothers from 24 different countries and from 14 international religious congregations. The variety of languages means that we have two or three translators at each session providing simultaneous translations to and from French, Spanish, Italian and English.



Participants at the program, Sammy is in the 4<sup>th</sup> row.

Throughout the program, we had different facilitators taking us through various topics. To mention a few : Inter-Cultural Living, Vocation of Brotherhood from the Biblical Context, aspects of Emerging Spirituality, Identity and Mission of Religious



Christian Brothers at the program with Hugo

Brothers in the Church, New Paradigms in Religious Life and several topics on formation.

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I had a week long to explore Rome before the Program began. I am very grateful to the brothers in the Generalate for their hospitality and for having me for a week. I am also very grateful to Senan who made sure that I visited places in and around Rome including a football stadium in Napoli.

I am very grateful to the Leadership for the opportunity given to me. In short, it was all about having experience and that's what I will take away from the Program.

*Samuel Kullai*

## THE FIRST MEETING OF LAY PROFESSIONALS IN ROME

On the occasion of the World Synod of Bishops, I had the privilege of attending the 1st World Meeting of Professional Lay Ministers on the theme of 'Beyond clericalism, for the people's sake on the empowerment of non-ordinary ministers'. This meeting was organized from the 1st of October to the 5th of October 2023 in Rome by the Association of Professional Pastoral Ministers in Germany, which at this moment might be the largest organization of full-time lay theologians in the world.

The meeting aimed at bringing together theologically educated laity and pastoral lay ministers from all continents to reflect on their status, role, and mission in a synodal church. The meeting also aimed at empowering lay ministers (non-ordained but theologically educated professional pastoral ministers) working in various countries all over the world given the fact that though their work is a long-given reality in the Roman Catholic Church, it still seems to be overshadowed many times by subversive ecclesial perspectives. Also though this ministry reveals an ecclesiological alternative to the "classical" dualism between clergy and laity, it is neither well-known nor largely accepted.

The meeting was attended by 22 professional lay ministers and theologians from 12 countries – Bolivia, Austria, Switzerland, Peru, Philippines, Ghana, India, USA, Germany, Korea, and Slovenia. In our five days together we prayed, discussed, shared amazing meals, and also had the chance to visit some important historical sites of Rome. We got to know each other, shared our experiences, and listened to each other as we engaged in the various processes that were designed to help us connect and reflect. The opening Mass of the Synod on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October was attended by some members of our group to show our solidarity with the Synod process. In addition to our exchange and as a fitting conclusion to our process, there was also a meeting with the participants of the Synod at an official evening get-together. The outcomes of the reflections of the meeting (which had been synthesized and compiled in a paper) were then shared with the Synod delegates. Through our interactions with the delegates and the paper, we hope that their voices would influence the processes of the World





Synod of Bishops so that lay ministries could become a sign of hope for the emerging Church.

My experience in the meeting was wonderful as I understood the varied contexts and structures in which many pastoral lay workers and theologians worked in their local churches on various continents across the world. I was also encouraged by the affirmative support of the participants who were respectful and open to listening to my experience as a lay Catholic Indian woman theologian. We did recognize the fact that though our struggles are different the common thread was our faith in the gospel of Christ which has the power to transform the lives of all whom we meet and work with. We all felt a deep connection with each other and realized that our bonds were unique and rare as a group that wanted to be part of the mission of the church in every sphere and in every way! We left with hope and renewed energy to support each other and to keep our movement alive so that we could together work in creating a church that truly 'journeys together'.

(To read the paper presented to the Synod delegates and more information please visit the website <https://www.bvpr-deutschland.de/world-meeting/>).



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*Grace David*

## BROTHERS RETREAT AT ERC, GOA



(L -R) Mark, Gerard, Frank, Bap, Fr. Felix, Gabes, Wilfi, Martin, Raj, Willie, Sameer, Larry, Placid)

Twelve Brothers attended a 6 day annual retreat organised by Wilfi D'Souza at the Edmund Rice Center, Goa. The retreat was an Ignatian retreat preached by Fr. Felix D'Souza, S.J., the Director of the Pedro Arupe Retreat Center, Raia.

The horarium for each day was a talk in the morning, the daily Eucharist after the coffee

break and a time for adoration in the evening. The participants thank Wilfi for organising the retreat.

## WHEN I'M 64.

The population of Earth is around 7.8 Billion.

For most people, it is a significant figure. However, if you condensed 7.8 billion into 100 persons, and then into various percentage statistics, the resulting analysis is relatively much easier to comprehend.

Out of 100 :  
11 are in Europe.



*Truly Free Truly Alive*





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5 are in North America  
9 are in South America  
15 are in Africa.  
60 are in Asia.

49 live in the countryside  
51 live in cities

75 have mobile phones.  
25 do not

30 have internet access.  
70 do not have the availability to go online.

83 can read.  
17 are illiterate.

33 are Christians.  
22 are Muslims.  
14 are Hindus.  
7 are Buddhists.  
12 are other religions.  
12 have no religious beliefs.

26 live less than 14 years Wow!  
66 died between 15 - 64 years of age.  
8 are over 65 years old.

If you have your own home,  
Eat full meals & drink clean water,  
Have a mobile phone,  
Can surf the internet, and  
have gone to college,  
You are in the minuscule privileged lot.  
(in the less than 7% category)

Amongst 100 persons in the world, only eight live or exceed the age of 65!

If you are over 65 years old, be content & grateful. Cherish life. Grasp the moment.

If you did not leave this world before the age of 64, like the 92 persons who have gone before you, you are already the blessed amongst humankind.





## POETRY SECTION

### A Rabbi's Prayer

Two peoples, one land,  
 Three faiths, one root,  
 One earth, one mother,  
 One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny,  
 One broken heart,  
 One God.  
 We pray to You:  
 Grant us a vision of unity.  
 May we see the many in the one and the one in the many.  
 May you, Life of All the Worlds,  
 Source of All Amazing Differences  
 Help us to see clearly.  
 Guide us gently and firmly toward each other,  
 Toward peace. Amen.

Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, Jewish Community of Amherst, Amherst, MA

**We cannot change the way world is, but by opening to the world as it is we may discover that gentleness, decency and bravery are available, not only to us, but to all human beings—Chögyam Trungpa , Buddhist teacher.**

