



INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa. The weather is still quite warm after the monsoons and one waits patiently for the “winter” season when one can bring out a light blanket at night.

On the 2nd of November, brothers from the 2 communities in Goa gathered at the Chicalim cemetery to pray for the Brothers buried there as well as the Brothers who died in Goa-Jus Harrison, Al Ballantyne and Milton Lawrence. We also prayed for the parents mothers of our Brothers: Olinda Rodrigues, Dorothy Pinto, Edith Noronha and Cynthia Noronha who are buried here.

We were also hosts for a few days to a number of Principals and the PLT who were on their way to or coming back from the Principals meeting held in Old Goa. We kept our ears to the ground but heard nothing besides the banging on the roof from the masons who are adding some rooms on the 1st floor of Shanti Nivas.

The 19th of November was World Poverty Day. On this day Pope Francis hosts a lunch for the homeless in Rome. A small group of people in Chicalim went around during the week distributing food hampers to those who have been made poor by the indifference of society.

Many Brothers who taught in Regina Mundi would remember Monica Gomes. She worked in the school for many years as a cleaner and was always a bright smiling face in the campus. She retired a few years ago and lives in a small house near the Cottage Hospital. This house belongs to Alex, who worked in the school as an electrician and now works in England as a Technician. Alex is a very generous person and has allowed Monica to stay in the house without paying any rent. Monica receives Rs. 2,000/ per month from the government and uses this money to cover her living expenses. When I asked her how she pays for medical expenses she said she does not fall sick. I gave her a little money to cover an emergency and she started sobbing! Monica goes to St. Andrew's church on Sunday's and uses the opportunity to buy her rations. A few friends now visit her regularly and are helping her.

The war in Ukraine continues and there is a fragile cease fire in Gaza. Manipur is now a forgotten story and one wonders if it is too small a state to enter the consciousness



of the politicians and Indian Society. It seems very ironic that after the Holocaust in the 20th century when 6 million Jews were killed and the world said that this should never happen again, what we are witnessing now is another holocaust that is being perpetrated by Israel and the world's leaders are sitting back and letting it happen.

Congratulations to Paul Robertson on completing his Ph. D. The thesis for his Ph. D. was "Passage through India: An Ethnography of Cultural Immersion Travel".

Yours fraternally

Mark

FIRST SYNOD RETREAT MEDITATION WITH FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE OP



On Sunday morning, 1 October, Dominican Friar and former Master of the Order of Preachers, Father Timothy Peter Joseph Radcliffe, reflected on the meaning of 'Hoping against hope' with those who participated in the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which began on Wednesday, 4 October.

When the Holy Father asked me to give this retreat, I felt enormously honoured but nervous. I am deeply aware of my personal limitations. I am old - white- a Westerner- and a man! I don't know which is worse! All of these aspects of my identity limit my understanding. So I ask for your forgiveness for the inadequacy of my words.

We are all radically incomplete and need each other. So when we listen to each other during the coming weeks and disagree, I pray we shall often say, 'Yes, and.....' Rather than 'No!' That is the Synodal way. Of course, No is also sometimes necessary!

In the second reading at Mass today, St Paul says to the Philippians: 'Complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing'. (Philippians 2.2). We are gathered here because we are not united in heart and mind. The vast majority of people who have taken part in the synodal process have been surprised by joy. For many, it is the first time that the Church has invited them to speak of their faith and hope. But some of us are afraid of this journey and of what lies

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RUMI





ahead. Some hope that the Church will be dramatically changed, that we shall take radical decisions, for example about the role of women in the Church. Others are afraid of exactly these same changes and fear that they will only lead to division, even schism. Some of you would prefer not to be here at all. A bishop told me that he prayed not to be chosen to come here. His prayer was granted! You may be like the son in today's gospel who at first does not want to go to the vineyard, but he goes!

At crucial moments in the gospels, we always hear these words: 'Do not be afraid.' St John tells us 'Perfect love casts out fear.' So let us begin by praying that the Lord will free our hearts from fear. For some this is the fear of change and for others the fear that nothing will change. But 'the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.[1]'

Of course, we all have fears, but Aquinas taught us that courage is refusing to be enslaved by fear. May we always be sensitive to the fears of others, especially those with whom we disagree. 'Like Abraham, we leave not knowing where we are going (Hebrews 11.8). But if we free our hearts of fear, it will be wonderful beyond our imagination.

To guide us during this retreat, we shall meditate on the Transfiguration. This is the retreat Jesus gives to his closest disciples before they embark on the first synod in the life of the Church, when they walk together (syn-hodos) to Jerusalem. This retreat was needed because they were afraid of this journey they must make together. Until now they have wandered around the north of Israel. But at Caesarea Philippi, Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ. Then Jesus invites them to go with him to Jerusalem, where he will suffer, die and be raised from the dead. They cannot accept this. Peter tries to prevent him. Jesus calls him 'Satan', 'enemy'. The little community is paralysed. So Jesus takes them up the mountain. Let us listen to St Mark's account of what happened.

'Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.' (9.2 - 8).

This retreat gives them the courage and hope to set off on their journey. It does not always go well. They immediately fail to free the young lad from the evil spirit. They quarrel about who is the greatest. They misunderstand the Lord. But they are on their way with a fragile hope.

So we too prepare for our synod by going on retreat where, like the disciples, we learn to listen to the Lord. When we set off in three days' time, we shall often be like those disciples, and misunderstand





each other and even quarrel. But the Lord will lead us onwards towards the death and resurrection of the Church. Let us ask the Lord to give us hope too: the hope that this synod will lead to a renewal of the Church and not division; the hope that we shall draw closer to each other as brothers and sisters. This is our hope not just for the Catholic Church but for all our baptised brothers and sisters. People talk of an 'ecumenical winter'. We hope for an ecumenical spring.

We also gather in hope for humanity. The future looks grim. Ecological catastrophe threatens the destruction of our home. Wildfires and floods have devoured the world this summer. Small islands begin to disappear under the sea. Millions of people are on the road fleeing from poverty and violence. Hundreds have drowned in the Mediterranean not far from here. Many parents refuse to bring children into a world that appears doomed. In China, young people wear T-shirts saying, 'We are the last generation'. Let us gather in hope for humanity, especially hope for the young.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHANTI NIVAS



Last month I completed 14 years 6 months in Shanti Nivas . In 91 years, that's the longest time I spent at a stretch in any one place on earth. I was 14 years 4 months in Belfast, in two communities, and 13 years 8 months at home before joining the Brothers. When the first four Irish Brothers came to India to amalgamate with the Calcutta Brothers in 1890, there was no talk of repatriation or of holidays home to Ire;and. Many of the early Irish Brothers who came to India died here and never saw Ireland again The same could be said of Brothers who went to Australia. I had an

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uncle a CB who was missioned to Australia and came back on holidays once after 30 years.

The elderly and sickly Brothers here in India used go to one of our boarding schools in the Hills - away from "the scorching plains of Hindusthan!" Such schools had dispensaries (the "hospie" in schoolboy jargon) where a Religious Sister or two would attend the sick. They also monitored the health of the ailing Brothers some of whom, because of their serious health condition and lack of adequate treatment, were recommended by doctors to return to Ireland where they were cared for in our Nursing Home, St. Patrick's, Baldoyle. As the years rolled on, some of the Hill Schools closed their boarding section. It was realised that our Indian Brothers would need hospice care; their going to Baldoyle was not an option. The issue was raised at a Chapter and it was decided that such a home would be established at Regina Mundi, Goa, where there was already a community of Brothers. Land was available, SMRC Hospital was nearby as were the Pallotti Fathers. The airport was 10 minutes away and the area had a Christian ambience.

Architect Tony Lobo had a plan for a building which was approved. There was some discussion about the site. Ollie Slattery was adamant that it should be near the school and his opinion prevailed. Aquinas McPhilemy who was sent to supervise the construction in 1994 had different ideas. Ironically, both died before the building was complete. God rest them. Mac wanted to call the new house JANUA COELI (Gates of Heaven) but SHANTI NIVAS {Abode of Peace} was agreed upon. Brother Jus Harrison was appointed first Director. He formed a community with a few elderly Brothers. Nurse Luisa Fernandes was appointed to oversee things medical.

A covered passageway was built to annex Regina Mundi and Shanti Nivas. As old Brothers died off the Brothers in both houses had meals and prayers together. The vacant rooms in Shanti Nivas were frequently used to accommodate visitors. It might be of interest to recall the names of those who died as inmates of Shanti Nivas, most of whom are buried in the parish cemetery which is literally down the hill from us. To date there are six Irish Brothers buried there - Brothers Aquinas McPhilemy, Ollie Slattery, Christy Murphy, Fintan O'Farrell, Bosco Oman and Borromeo Walsh, {Their names and details figure on the Wall of Remembrance in Blessed Edmund Rice Cemetery, Baldoyle.) There are two Malayalees - Brothers Bosco Aykaramattam and Thomas Ittikunnath; four Anglo-Indians - Brothers George Bennet, Fabian McGrath, Paul Bela and Bernard Vieyra. Peter Gomez was East Indian and Cyril Christopher a Goan. Jus Harrison, an Australian, died here but is buried in Bajpe, Mangalore. Likewise Al Ballantyne, an Anglo-Indian (buried in Jellikot) and Milton Lawrence, an Easr-Indian, buried in Bandra. Three mothers of Brothers were also inmates here - Dorothy (Adi Pinto's Mum). Edoth, her sister who was Len Noronha's Mum, and Cynthia, Raj Noronha's Mum. At present all the eight ground floor bedrooms in Shanti Nivas are occupied. In fact new rooms are being added to the first floor as I write.

We are blessed to have the services of Nurse Soccourinha Baptista who is very competent. dedicated





and efficient. She cared for the early Brothers when she was on the staff of SMRC and she is on duty here seven days a week for the last twenty years. Soccu liaises with the ever-obliging Dr. Carmen Varela to keep her apprised of the Brothers' health. There are two others - Shilpa and Inacio - who are instructed by Soccu to administer medicines in her absence during the night. Shilpa stays 24 hours for 3 days and Inacio for 4 days. Between them they are responsible for the cleanliness of the house and for any other jobs that are required. There is a full time attendant in Brother Steve D'Souza's room 24 X 7. Culinary matters are looked after by Carmelina and Francisca, two ladies from Chicalim village. We are very well looked after. There is a Blessed Sacrament Chapel in each house and a Pallotti Father used to come daily to offer Mass. Since Covid 19 we only have the anticipated Sunday vigil Mass on Saturday evening which is also attended by the Brothers from the Edmund Rice Centre, Bogmalo. During the Covid lockdown, things (like elsewhere) were very difficult. There were no meals or prayers together and no visitors allowed into the house. We were all masked. Please keep Shanti Nivas in your prayers. Visit when you can. During my years here I have observed that loneliness is one of the big problems with the elderly.



Bap Finn

MEETING OF THE PRINCIPALS AND SECRETARIES OF THE CCBI SCHOOLS FROM 30TH OCTOBER TO 3RD NOVEMBER 2023 AT GOA.

TOWARDS VISION 2030.

The Principals and Secretaries of CCBI schools, along with the MO and PLT, convened for a five-day training and seminar at the quaint St. Joseph's Vaz Retreat Center in Old Goa. Over these five days, from October 30th to November 3rd 2023, the gathering dealt with several crucial and current issues impacting the world of education, specifically within the CCBI Schools.

A couple of weeks before the Goa meeting, literature on the Vision Statement, anchored in the 5 Pillars for vibrant and nurturing educational institutions of the Edmund Rice family, was circulated. There were readings like Immersive Citizenship, the World Economic Forum's White Paper on defining education 4.0, OECD's Student

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Agency for 2030, Innovative Pedagogies, NEP 2020, among others, shared to prepare the participants.

The initial two days, facilitated by the EKAM team, focused on discussions centered around the CCBI 2030 Vision based on the 5 pillars. Topics ranged from scheduling, designing and restructuring Lesson Plans to integrating the 5 pillars into pedagogy. For some who are getting acquainted about these pillars for the first time - A comprehensive understanding of these pillars emerged from the last Principals' Meeting at Siloam, Shillong. These pillars include Spiritual Enrichment, Empowerment through Education, Environmental Stewardship, Unity and Inclusivity, and Values and Community. These pillars aim to provide a holistic education nurturing compassionate, responsible, and socially conscious individuals. Quoting from the vision statement , *"These five pillars represent our unwavering dedication to providing a holistic education that prepares students to be compassionate, responsible, and socially conscious individuals who make a positive impact on the world. Our school is a place where faith, knowledge, and community come together to create a brighter future for all."*

EKAM's sessions also included exploration of aligning cognitive levels with learning outcomes and assessments catering to school needs and individual learners. Intensive introspection occurred regarding defining overlapping roles within the school leadership team.

Sessions were dedicated to legal awareness and mental well-being by Mrs. Chama Mookherjee and the Sethu team respectively. Mrs. Mookherjee shared her expertise and knowledge on the responsibilities of a school as a "loco parent". Her discussions covered school responsibilities, constitutional rights in education, documentation importance for disciplinary issues and roles of management committee members. Her inputs were intriguing but elucidating at the same time. The mental well-being session conducted by Sethu emphasized leaders' engagement for personal well-being and fostering a comfortable learning environment. They highlighted the significance to enculturate the values ensconced in the acronym "CLAP" which essentially fragments to Celebrate (staff meetings, PTAs, assemblies, etc) , Listen (to learn and focus), Appreciate (honesty , best practices) and Prevent (habits which harm mental well being).

Br. Solomon Morris shared innovative assessment sheets deviating from traditional patterns, focusing on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) aligned with NEP requirements. Br. Robert discussed the nuances of the Franciscan ERP solution for better school logistics and finances. Br. Larry highlighted teachers' preparedness with students' prior knowledge while Br. Joe Johnson addressed financial compliances and Protective Behaviour Policies that are and should be in place on our institutions. Participants were also given an opportunity to share good practices being followed by them in an open forum which the others could take back and initiate at their own schools.





A visit to a place like Goa would have been incomplete without some fun and frolic. An evening of fellowship on a ferry along the serene waters of river Mandvi in Goa was also organised. Goan music, dancing and delectable local cuisine made the evening memorable.

The meeting wrapped up with the distribution of participation certificates and gratitude expressed by Br. Steve, the Province Leader, towards the Ministries Office headed by Br. Simon for organizing the enriching program.

Ravi Victor

EDMUND RICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM SEPTEMBER 2023



All the participants with the hosts- Brian, Tino and Terry, Indian reps. – Neha, Marda and Shawn



The Opening Liturgy



In front of the United Nations Building



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Group Work



Last Supper

Shawn Viegas

WHEN I AM PAST 64

Take good care of your health. Cherish every remaining moment.

AND NOW: Pay attention all you thinkers! This is an area that is staring me in the face daily. If you think you are suffering memory loss, read on.

Anosognosia, very interesting: In the following analysis, the French Professor Bruno Dubois, Director of the Institute of Memory and Alzheimer's Disease (IMMA) at La Pitié-Salpêtrière - Paris Hospital, addresses the subject in a rather reassuring way:

"If anyone is aware of their memory problems, they do not have Alzheimer's." If you

1. forget the names of people.
2. do not remember where you put some things .

It often happens in people 60 years and older that they complain that they lack memory. "The information is always in the brain, it is the "processor" that is lacking."

This is "Anosognosia" or temporary forgetfulness.

Half of people 60 and older have some symptoms that are due to age rather than disease. The most





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common cases are:

- ◆ forgetting the name of a person,
- ◆ going to a room in the house and not remembering why we were going there,
- ◆ a blank memory for a movie title or actor, an actress,
- ◆ a waste of time searching where we left our glasses or keys.

After 60 years most people have such a difficulty, which indicates that it is not a disease but rather a characteristic due to the passage of years .

Many people are concerned about these oversights hence the importance of the following statements:

1. "Those who are conscious of being forgetful have no serious problem of memory."
2. "Those who suffer from a memory illness or Alzheimer's, are not aware of what is happening."

Professor Bruno Dubois, Director of IMMA, reassures the majority of people concerned about their oversights: "The more we complain about memory loss, the less likely we are to suffer from memory sickness."

We are truly blessed, So, share this with your over-64 friends, it can reassure them.

In any case, if you are over 65 and complaining about a few aches and pains, think again92% of people didn't even get that opportunity.

POETRY SECTION

DO NOT DISTURB

Like the sound of silence...

The day is dumb.

It's neither rain nor dry –

a don't-care label.

Like distant breakers





traffic shushes to and fro.
 Colour has opted grey.
 Blossoms no longer woo.
 Leaves fall, soak, surrender.
 The very gulls sound bored,
 and even my pen is fatigued,
 stitching its lines wearily together.
 I rummage for inspiration,
 but today's not interested.
 Be quiet, it mutters;
 settle for silence.

Brendan October 2023.

A small dose of Philosophy

November 24th. was the birthday of BARUCH DE SPINOZA (November 24,1632 — February 21, 1677). I relate so much to his philosophy, and have lived it (well most of the time) for the past few decades!

Did you know that when Einstein attended conferences in the numerous universities of the USA, the recurring question that the students asked him was: "Do you believe in God?"

And he always answered: "I believe in the God of Spinoza."

If you haven't read Spinoza hope this will give you an idea.

Baruch De Spinoza was a Dutch philosopher, of Portuguese Jewish origin, considered one of the great rationalists of his time along with the French philosopher Rene Descartes. Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in the 17th century of a businessman father who was successful but not wealthy.

This is the nature of the God of Spinoza:

God would have said: "Stop praying and giving yourselves blows on your chests, what I want you to do is to go out into the world to enjoy your life. I want you to enjoy, you sing, have fun and enjoy everything I've done for you.





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Stop going to those gloomy, dark and cold temples that you built yourself and that you call my home. My house is in the mountains, in the forests, the rivers, the lakes, the beaches. That's where I live and express all my love for you.

Stop blaming me for your miserable life; I never told you that you were a sinner. Stop being so scared. I do not judge you, nor criticize you, nor ever is angry with you, nothing bothers me, nor do I devise punishment. I am pure love.

Stop asking me forgiveness, there's nothing to forgive. If I made you... I filled you with passions, limitations, pleasures, feelings, needs, inconsistencies... of free will, how can I blame you if you do or say something out of that what I put in you? How can I punish you for being as you are, if I'm the one who made you? Do you think I could create a place to burn all my children who misbehave, for the rest of eternity?

What kind of God can do that?

Forget about any kind of commandments, of any kind of laws; those are wiles to manipulate you, to control you and only to create guilt in you. Respect your peers and don't do to others what you don't want for you. The only thing I ask is that you pay attention in your life, that your alert status is your guide. This life is the only thing there is, here and now and the only thing you need.

I have made you absolutely free, there are no prizes or punishments, there are no sins or virtues, no one carries a marker, no one carries a record. You are absolutely free to create in your life a heaven or hell.

I couldn't tell you if there's anything after this life, but I can give you a tip. Live as if there wasn't. As if this was your only chance to enjoy, to love, to exist.

So, if there is nothing, then you will have enjoyed the opportunity I gave you. And if there is, be sure that I will not ask you if you behaved well or not, I will ask you. Did you like it?... did you have fun ?..What did you enjoy the most? What did you learn?

Stop believing in me; belief is to assume, guess, imagine. I don't want you to believe in me, I want you to feel me when you kiss your beloved, when you play with your little girl, when you love your dog, when you bathe in the sea.

Stop praising me. *What kind of egotistical God do you think I am? I'm bored of your praise; I'm fed up with thanks. Do you feel grateful? Prove it taking care of yourself, your health, your relationships, the world around you. Do you feel overwhelmed?





Express your joy! That's the way to praise me.

The only thing sure is that you are here, that you are alive, that this world is full of wonders. What do you need more miracles for? Why so many explanations?

Don't look for me outside, you won't find me. Find me inside... there I'm beating in you. Baruch De Spinoza.

Anil Kapur (a class mate of mine in XLRI)



“Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world. It is the desire of many people tormented by hunger, by injustice and by war. It is the desire of the poor, the weak, the abandoned. This is a favourable time to open our hearts, to ask ourselves concrete questions about how and for whom we expend our lives.”

Pope Francis

