



INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa.

As the month of June comes to close, the Monsoons having played hide and seek with us for a good part of the month has finally made up for the earlier shortfall with some very heavy showers..

On the 13th of June, we received the sad news that Martha Menezes had passed on. Martha is the mother of Gerry Menezes, a Brother of the Indian Province on loan to the North American Province. Gerry has been teaching in Iona Prep, New Rochelle, USA for the last few years, We offer our sincere condolences to Gerry, his sister Shirley and other members of his family.

A couple of months ago, Edmund Rice International organised a zoom seminar on Advocacy. There were two resource persons. Cormac Mc Cart, a lay member of the Edmund Rice Family, in Ireland and Sr. Dorothy Fernandes, a Presentation Sister. Sr. Dorothy has shared her story of working in Patna, with the marginalised people of the state of Bihar.

A very well known educationist, Sr. Cyril Mooney, IBVM passed away on Saturday, the 24th of June. She taught in many schools of her congregation, including Loreto School, Sealdah, where she pioneered the Rain Bow project. The Rainbow project is a night shelter for homeless children and uses the top floors of many of the Loreto Convents. Sr. Cyril was awarded the Padma Shri in 2007.

The state of Manipur has been experiencing a lot of turbulence in the last 2 months. The Catholic Bishops Conference has requested that July 2nd be observed as a special day of prayer for the people of Manipur.

The 27th of June is a special day for the Congregation. We were fortunate to have 3 members of the PLT with us to celebrate this important date in the life of our congregation. The intercession of Mary helped our Brothers to get permission from Rome to open missions outside Ireland.

Yours fraternally

Mark



NOTHING REALLY CHANGED AFTER VATICAN II. BUT SYNODALITY MAY MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

(Part 1-Why was there no change)

The word *synodality* has been around a year or so now and people are still asking what it really means — for them, of course. The last time the church said it was going to make changes was in 1965. Fifty-eight years ago. In the meantime, all the changes to be seen were basically meaningless ones. Not because change was forbidden. On the contrary.

The Vatican documents of 1965 oozed theological life. They were clearly meant to dispense with the church of the Middle Ages, to bring the church into the modern world rooted in Scripture and the model of Jesus.

But as the ocean liner that brought so many of the American Catholic hierarchy back from Rome disembarked, the New York press corps, snapping pictures and shouting questions, suffered one bishop after another shrugging their questions off. Nothing had really changed, it seemed. Nothing newsworthy, at least.

In essence, the assumption was correct. Whatever changes the people had wanted from the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council were, it seemed, formless, silent, lost in the bustle of a busy church frozen in a medieval mind. Instead, after 400 years without a council of reform, the kinds of changes the people had expected from this council lay yet in Rome, drying in wet ink there and largely ignored here.

Even more to the point, few, if any, priests taught the council documents to their congregations. Few if any priests admitted that they themselves had not bothered to read the documents either.

Oh, a few churches redesigned their confession boxes and a few more took down the altar rails, but really, other than that and the move to the vernacular in all liturgical events — nothing much did happen. Most of the changes were window dressing.

No one talked about reunion with the Christian family of multiple denominations, for instance. No one moved to include women as fully baptized members of the church.

Lay consultants and episcopal advisers, quickly chosen, were disposed of in short order. The lay ministers that had been so long awaited were educated in local seminaries by the thousands and then shrunk quietly away in great numbers, too, as fewer and fewer of them were really deployed in the ministry of the church itself.



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The male church in large part stayed male despite the few women allowed in minor offices like readers or altar servers "as long as men were not available." The prayers and pronouns of the church pronounced the church to be male in every particle while women remained invisible and left the church in large numbers quietly now.

Why did nothing change when change was called for?

Well, to be clear, the 2,000-2,500 bishops from around the world who attended this 21st ecumenical council voted yes for all of its documents, but once back on home soil, many simply ignored them, that's why.

The two popes, John XXIII and Paul VI, who had led the way to these times died. The popes who had called the Second Vatican Council to bring the church into the modern world lived on in the hearts of the new church in the pews.

But both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI resisted the full force of Vatican II. Though they never denounced the council, they never really promoted it either.

Joan Chittister

THE SILENT SCREAM

Part 2

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMON TRIGGERS OF TEEN STRESS?

(Source: Kathleen Smith, PhD, LPC)

All teens are different and stress can be triggered by a number of factors. The results of the Stress in America Survey show that there are some common sources of stress in the teen population. I wonder if some of these triggers apply to our teens in Shillong as well. Consider these potential sources of stress for teens:

1. Academic Stress

From grades to test scores to applying to college, teens experience high levels of school-related stress. Many teens worry about meeting academic demands, pleasing teachers and parents, and keeping up with their classmates. Poor time management skills or feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work can play into academic stress as well.

2. Social Stress





Teens place a high value on their social lives. They spend the majority of their waking hours

among their peers, and finding and keeping their tribes can include stress at times. Bullying and subtle instances of relational aggression are clear sources of stress on teens, but learning to manage healthy conflict and work through romantic relationships are no easy tasks for the developing teen. Peer pressure is an additional stress during the teen years. In an effort to establish and maintain friendships, teens can engage in behaviour outside of their comfort zones to appease their peers.

3. Family Discord

Stress trickles down, and anything that impacts the family can affect the teen. Unrealistic expectations, marital problems, strained sibling relationships (including sibling bullying), illness in the family, and financial stress on the family can all trigger a spike in teen stress.

4. World Events

School shootings, acts of terrorism, and natural disasters worry parents, but they also trigger stress for teens. Teens are often privy to the 24-hour news cycle, and hearing bits and pieces of scary news, both domestic and abroad, can leave teens wondering about their safety and the safety of their loved ones.

5. Traumatic Events

Death of a family member or friend, accidents, sickness, or enduring emotional or physical abuse can have a lasting impact on teen stress levels.

6. Significant Life Changes

Like adults, teens experience stress due to significant life changes. Moving, starting a new school, and changes in the makeup of the family (including divorce and blended families) can trigger stress for teens. Not knowing how to cope with big changes is overwhelming and can be confusing for the developing teen. Excessive screen time can have several negative effects on students, including:



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Physical Health Problems: Spending too much time in front of screens can cause physical health problems such as headaches, neck and back pain, eyestrain, and obesity.

Poor Sleep: Exposure to screens before bedtime can disrupt the sleep cycle and lead to insomnia, which can negatively impact students' mental and physical health.

Decreased Physical Activity: Spending excessive time on screens can lead to decreased physical activity and sedentary behavior, which can have a negative impact on students' health and well-being.

Reduced Social Skills: Students who spend too much time on screens may have fewer opportunities to practice social skills and interact with others in real life, which can hinder their ability to form meaningful relationships and develop social competence.

Lower Academic Performance: Excessive screen time can distract students from their schoolwork and reduce their ability to concentrate, leading to lower academic performance.

Mental Health Issues: Too much screen time can have a negative impact on students' mental health and well-being. It can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and social isolation.

Addiction: Excessive screen time can lead to addiction and dependency on technology, making it difficult for students to disconnect and engage in other activities. It is important for parents and educators to monitor and limit students' screen time to minimize the negative effects on their physical, mental, and academic health.

HOW DO WE HELP OUR CHILDREN WHO ARE ADDICTED TO SCREEN TIME?

Set Limits: Establish clear limits on the amount of time children spend on social media and social networking sites. Parents can set specific times for social media use or establish no-phone zones in the house, such as during meals or family time.

Set Goals and Priorities: Help teens set goals and priorities for their screen time. Encourage them to prioritize their time and focus on activities that are important to them.

Monitor Usage: Parents should monitor children's social media usage and be aware of the content they are accessing. It is essential to have open and honest conversations with children about the risks and negative effects of excessive social media use.

Encourage Alternative Activities: Encourage children to engage in alternative activities that do not involve screens, such as reading, sports, or hobbies.

Encourage Creative Activities: Encourage teens to engage in creative activities such as art, music, or writing. Creative activities can provide a healthy outlet for self-expression and help teens develop new skills and interests.





Be a Role Model: Parents should model healthy behaviour by limiting their own screen time and engaging in alternative activities.

Seek Professional Help: If a child's social media addiction is severe, it may be necessary to seek professional help. A therapist or counsellor can help children develop coping skills and strategies for managing their social media use.

It's essential to approach social media addiction with empathy, understanding, and support. Children who are addicted to social media may be struggling with underlying emotional or mental health issues that need to be addressed. By providing a safe and supportive environment, parents can help children overcome social media addiction and develop healthy habits around technology use.

I earnestly appeal to the parents and elders of the family to kindly be aware of how your young children are engaging themselves during their free time. Let them inform you of their whereabouts when they are out. When they do go out to celebrate their birthdays, please challenge them to be responsible and accountable. Be firm with them especially in their use of mobile phones and computers. You saying 'No' to them is not a sign of being authoritarian but rather being authoritative. Talk to your children and be there for them. Make efforts to have regular family meals and get together. Organize family outings and gatherings. Lastly, please look for help if you feel your child is manifesting odd or strange behaviours. Parents, Teachers, Counsellors and Principals, all need to work together to address the silent spread of internet addiction and its devastating effects to which our children have fallen prey. Their silent screams for help need not go unattended. We need to reach out to these fragile individuals who are clutching at weak straws to stop themselves sinking into a quagmire of self-destruction.

The silence depressed me. It wasn't the silence of silence. It was my own silence. (Sylvia Plath)

Solly Morris

THE UNSEEN....THE UNHEARD....

My story begins with my journey in 2003 of walking along the streets of Patna and noticing women, children families living along the roadside with a plastic sheet as their roof. Further there were communities living along drains, under bridges just occupying a place to save themselves from the weather conditions. Who were these people? The unprotected citizens of the city, who served the city but had no right to



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the city. This disturbed me even as I returned home to my comfortable house and bed. The images of these people kept disturbing me; in the silence of my heart, I was compelled to respond. The poverty glaring in the eyes was enormous and I could not understand how people could live in this manner.

Finding young women and men from Patna and sharing with them the situation and inviting them to join hands was the beginning of our intervention. A very young boy, young lady and a man joined me with no assurance, as to where the money would come to pay for their monthly needs. We walked long distances as we couldn't afford public transport. Fortunately in 2005 the central government introduced a scheme – JNNURM which clearly stated the enhancing of the cities. 65 cities across India were chosen and Patna and Bodh

Gaya two cities were chosen for this scheme. This was a powerful scheme to bring in a ray of hope in the lives of our people.

In order to work for the homeless, we used to have a 'night out'. We began walking the streets of Patna after 8.00

pm to get a feel how many slept in the streets. Then we would go to the Patna Railway Station to interact with the children on the platform and then sleep on the platform till dawn. This experience has given us a kind of commitment to the issue of homelessness which no training can provide.

We studied the scheme; explored the implementing agency, got their contacts and met them on a regular basis. This information was a powerful tool as we visited the people in the settlements and



shared information. Regular gatherings of representatives of the settlements paved the way to identify leaders in the local communities. Education about housing as a "Human right" was the focus. We began to invite people to share their agony of being denied basic necessities of life – like water, washrooms, electricity. We also familiarized our people about the Constitutional Provision and the land mark judgments given on settlements, by none other than the Chief Justice of the Delhi High court. Once our people were convinced they were prepared to join in the





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struggle. As time went on we exercised our democratic rights by organizing sit -in protests, rallies, Conventions, press conferences to gain publicity. While we demonstrated on the streets we got the elected representatives of the government – MLA's and MP's to raise the issue of homelessness in the Assembly and Parliament ensuring our voices; our struggle reached the appropriate platform.

Most governments and their bureaucrats are anti-poor so when we did not get the necessary results we filed cases on the government demanding accountability of the funds received for housing. This may have enraged them so they began by evicting and demolishing the homes of our people without prior information or rehabilitation schemes. The struggle continued, advocating with all levels of governance – the department of urban housing and development, the labor department, the food security department and the Patna Municipal Corporation, the District Magistrate. Our visits to these offices were calling them to accountability. As the journey continued our women and men became vocal; they were getting powerful, unafraid to speak and demand for their rights.

Our two feet approach with advocacy and services has enhanced the social and economic life of our people. Almost all the children are in school and have finished high school. Running about 6 centers in different settlements for the young women for skill training of 12 months has enabled the young women to get skilled, begin small businesses and add to the income of the family. By encouraging them to get their entitlements and linking them with government schemes they have been able to live with dignity as their economic status has improved. Enrolling the construction workers with the labor department of the government of Bihar, the many schemes for the construction workers have been realized for our people.

Setting up temporary shelters in the winter months for the homeless has been recognized. Today the Bihar government has appointed me as a commissioner on the committee for Shelter for Urban homeless (SUH) under the direction of the Supreme Court of India. These monthly meetings gives me an opportunity to interact with the heads of departments and the all the commissioners of the different districts of the Municipal Corporation and put in suggestions and point out areas of change.

The communities are getting empowered and determined to keep the struggle going; they are the human face of God who have opened up a new avenue for me....to them I say thanks.

Dorothy Fernandes, PBVM





EREBB GLOBAL IMMERSION 2023

INDIA – SOUTH AFRICA – URUGUAY

HOST – CBC ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAPE TOWN, CNR DORCHESTER DRIVE & PARKLANDS MAIN ROAD PARKLANDS 7441

An article by St. Vincent's High and Technical School - India

It was a privilege to be one of the Christian Brother schools in India, who had the opportunity to be a part of the immersion programme and interconnect with students from Stella Maris, Uruguay and St. John's College, South Africa.



It was awe-inspiring experience learning about their culture and traditions. In fact, the cultural differences and similarities made us go through a heuristic process, which inculcated within us an understanding and respect for the diverse traditions. To bring them in league with our heritage, way of life and school curriculum we did put up a power point presentation. To our amazement, they were overwhelmed to see how India has different ethnic groups which makes it a diverse country yet so very unified in its own unique way.



Moving forward, the multi-faceted veils of our Indian tradition unfolded through different forms of dance and varieties of Indian cuisine.

This trip to South Africa, did teach us one thing that a person cannot be defined rich by his economic resources but by the magnanimity of his heart. One of the keynotes of the program was to render service to the destitute. Edmund rice had once said, " nobody is so poor that he has nothing to give and nobody is so rich that he has nothing to receive," keeping this in mind, we did pack 20,000 meals for the underprivileged people.

We were fortunate to explore many places and were also involved in manifold activities. From being a





babysitter- to playing musical instruments like the marimba it was indeed an eye-opener to the numerous realms of informative and impacting experiences.

The key takeaway of this immersion programme was that even though we were from different continents, the binding factor was the ethos and spirit of blessed Edmund Ignatius rice which had interconnected us and made us feel an integral part of the larger community.

The team — SVTS, Asansol

Ms. Anita Mathew - Co-ordinator, St. Vincent's Asansol

OUR NEWEST CANDIDATES IN SHILLONG

Our two Vocation Promoters- William D'Souza and Jayanti Chauhan have been working very hard to get young people to join our congregation. They have succeeded in getting nine young men to join our English program. Given below is a brief thumb sketch of each candidate.

Anish Lugun, is 19 years old. He was born in the state of Odisha. His parents are James and Helena. He has successfully completed his Higher Secondary course.

Sushant Malik is the son of Domnic and Helena. He is 18 years old and was born in Odisha. Before going to Shillong he had completed his Metric(Class 10)

Ashok Malik's parents are Josef and Rebeca, He is 18 years old from the state of Odisha and has completed his Metric(Class 10) exam.

Joydeep Topno is 18 years old and is the son of Daud and Monica. He is one of three candidates from Assam and has completed his Metric(Class 10) exam.

Atish Kerketta was born in the state of Assam. He is 18 years old and is the son of Bachan and Salmi. He has completed his Metric(Class 10 exam)

Klement Malik, son of Sukant and Sushila was born in Odisha. Before going to Shillong, he completed his Metric(Class 10 exam)

Subhashi Bhera is 17 years old from Odisha. He is the son of Bipra and Padmini. He has successfully completed is Metric(Class 10 exam)

Johan Surin is from Assam and is the son of Paw and Marim. He is only 16 years and has completed his Metric(Class 10 exam)



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Rajprasad Naik is the youngest of the youngest of the group and is also 16 years old. He is the son of Debaprasad and Sudhan. He has completed his Metric (Class 10 exam)

(First Row: L-R:
Rajprasad Nayak, Atish
Kerketta, Joydeep Topno,
Ashok Malik, Anish
Lugun, Subhashish
Behera.



Back Row: L-R: Klement
Malik, Johan Surin and
Sushant Malik)

Paistar

POETRY SECTION

NEW LIFE

A week ago or more or less

I cannot say – so deep the mystery
that circumstrides my memory and
wraps me in a timeless bind
of wonder.

I had been invited,

after years of yearning
to be present when
a mother brought new life
into the world and change
herself and me forever.

It was her first and

maybe she – I surely –
was wrapped up in the unfolding drama –
for her a lived experience while
for me a gripping





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and an awe-filled spectacle.

How to describe what has to be beyond
the reach of words?
All I can say is that the bed was stage
where God and nurses worked
their skillful magic, speaking in gestures
to respect the silence of the sacred moment.
It was or seemed a blend
of mystery and what was purely physical –
of *fiat* and *facebo*
[of 'be done' and 'I will do'.]

It was fully fitting that Christmas
was still in the air and I
found myself transported as
Shepherd¹ or Wise Man² to
another Bethlehem.

My Silent Night surrendered to
an overture of groans
that led to screams.
Could it be I wondered
that the flow of blood and water
as once on Calvary³
would be God's signature
to underscore the coming of new life?

Ah screams again drowning the nurses'
calls to breathe:
Breathe in, they said, and push,
and push again in spite of passing pain.
Let stretching be the gate to greet
the new
with pain turned joy turned bliss.
The mother-to-be obeyed and
I could sense the moment was
upon us.

It was and suddenly





a head appeared and then a body.
 The mother's groan and sigh
 and seeming half asleep
 announced the presence
 of a babe and set in motion
 A flurry of activity.

That birth could be so messy put an end
 to those romantic images linked in my mind
 to the phenomenon.
 What shall I tell this tiny girl in
 years to come?
 And shall I say that
 "Once upon a time even before your mother
 I saw you in your blood and whispered
 as God did in Ezekiel⁴,
 "Live!"

¹ Bible, Luke 2:8

² Bible, Matthew 2:1

³ Bible, John 19:34

⁴ Bible, Ezekiel 16:6

Kevin Ward



JTI CLUSTER BULLETIN
 JULY 2023

A prayer for Manipur, which soon enters seventy days of violence:

May God bless us with a restless discomfort,

that pierces our souls and unsettles our complacency. Let the haunting news of suffering in Manipur bother us we try to sleep at night, let it be the first thought when we wake up, let it be the burning bush that fires us to liberate God's people.

May God bless us with holy anger,





when injustice, and violence run rampant. When politicians sow divisions and conflict, and our own hierarchies stay clueless, may this holy anger fuel us to be a voice for the voiceless in a world that desperately needs justice and peace.

May God bless us with the gift of tears,

our compassion which flows and connects us to the anguish of those who suffer. Our hearts shed tears alongside those who endure the agonizing uncertainty of their loved ones' fate, unsure if they will ever embrace them again or find solace in the homes they painstakingly build. We weep over our helplessness of what needs to be done.

May God bless us with enough foolishness,

to believe that our tiny actions can really make a difference. May we be blessed with the audacity to believe that our protest rallies matter even as the violence continues unabated. Amen.

PATHARLYNDAN

In Patharlyndan, the scorching heat of May lingered longer than anticipated, withholding the much-awaited showers of rain. The prolonged delay disrupted the farmers' plans, who eagerly awaited the rain to commence their work in the fields. This sudden change in the rain pattern starkly contrasted with the previous years' experience.

On the 5th of May the Brothers celebrated the Blessed Edmund Rice Feast Day of the Congregation in the Patharlyndan village chapel with the Patharlyndan village community. Jerry, Vinod, and Ajay renewed their vows on this auspicious occasion. The villagers actively participated in large numbers, joined by the Hub members and the Umtyrkhang community, elevating the festive spirit.

A month later, on June 5th, the village rejoiced in celebrating World Environment Day by embarking on a tree-planting initiative on Lum Laudato Si' hill. The diligent efforts of the field workers, Balawansuk and Tobias, alongside the Iatyllilang Edmund Rice Youth Action group, contributed significantly to the program's success. The three

A PRAYER FOR MANIPUR

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restless discomfort ...

May God bless us with holy
anger ...

May God bless us with the
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May God bless us with
enough foolishness ...



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The youth group planting trees on Lum Laudato Si'



Jerry, Vinod and Ajay renew vows in Patharlyndan

schools associated with the brothers also participated enthusiastically in the tree-

planting campaign. Notably, the presence of village executive members enhanced the awareness regarding the necessity of preserving trees and safeguarding the environment. The support shown by the Hub members further encouraged the village youth and leaders to embrace tree plantation as a positive endeavour. Since it was hot and no rain only few trees were planted and the rest of the trees were planted on the 24th of June with the help of the field workers and some youth of the village.

UMTYRKHANG

Early in the month of May, Donald, Pradik and Kitbok, doing the English course in Shillong were in Umtyrkhang for a week's experience. They prepared for classes to be taught in the two schools that



Umtyrkhang brothers adding their voices in Jyntru to celebrate Jockey's birthday



Ajay training the eager village youth in knitting and craft





the Brothers' are teaching in, learnt thread art and card making and participated in the house prayers and visits in the village.

The Brothers also started taking Study Hour for the children in Umtyrkhang and on Saturdays knitting and craft classes for the youth and children. They attend the knitting and craft classes regularly and there is great energy. In the month of June as the children started preparing for the exams, starting mid-June.

The Brothers attended the Parish Feast Day celebration, in Umsohlait on the 28th of May and then on the 4th of June to Umsiang for the inaugural function of the New Parish. The Brothers were grateful to the Sangram community for their visit to Umtyrkhang in sharing Brotherhood.

On the 12th of June the younger female pig delivered 7 piglets, and are growing healthily. This is part of the collaboration of the Brothers with a local self help group.

ERPAKON

On Saturday, June 10, the Ribhoi CRI unit organized a peace and solidarity program at the MUDA complex in Nongpoh. The primary objective of the event was to promote solidarity, justice, and peace and raise awareness of pressing issues, particularly the Manipur unrest. The gathering drew a significant attendance of over 300 individuals, including religious fathers, brothers, and sisters from Ribhoi district, Shillong, and Guwahati. The Brothers played a leading role in coordinating the rally.

We had the pleasure of hosting five members from ERN Bangalore - Janet, Peter, Myrna, Chris, and Glen. We had a wonderful time with them, engaging in delightful conversations that made time fly by quickly. They visited Umtyrkhang before



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The Brothers from the Hub before the Solidarity program in Nongpoh



Marian month rosary in the Hub. We had over hundred people in the house.





proceeding to St Edmunds on the next day.

Some of the young brothers from the Cluster were appearing for their IGNOU MA exams in June. Gambhir and Ajay were staying with us and appearing for their exams in Balawan College in Umsning. In the months of May and June, Sunil spend a week each in Umtyrkhang and Patharlyndan. Jockey spend a week in Umtyrkhang. Visiting mission communities can be a joyful and enriching experience.

We celebrated Jockey's 69th birthday with great enthusiasm and spirit. Edwin and Jerry joined us from Umtyrkhang to make the celebration more special.

Sunil Britto

PRAYING WITH OUR FEET

The spirituality of peaceful rallies

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Jewish scholar and mystic, actively participated in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s peaceful protest in Selma in 1965. Upon his return from Selma, someone asked him, "Did you manage to find time to pray while you were there?" In response, he said, "I prayed with my feet." He would say that his peaceful protesting and advocating for Civil Rights was his greatest prayer of all.

Inspired by the letter of CRI President Sr. Nirmalini, religious men and women organised and took part in rallies all across the country. This is something unfamiliar to many of us and yet its significance is becoming increasingly essential given the state of the nation.

Spiritual author Brian McLaren writes: "There is nothing more radically activist than a truly spiritual life, and there is nothing more truly spiritual than a radically activist life." The current moment calls spiritual people to get active and the activist people to get spiritual. We need our internal revolution to direct the outer revolution.



Green activist John Halstead enumerates four different ways which link spirituality and activism related with peaceful demonstrations:

1. Owning our Pain for the World

In her book *Coming Back to Life: The Guide to the Work that Reconnects*, activist Joanna Macy





emphasizes the significance of embracing the profound grief and anguish that arises as we become more conscious of the state of our world. Engaging in protests provides us with a collective opportunity to honour this visceral pain rather than suppressing or diverting our attention from it.

2. Seeing the Truth of Our Interconnectedness

After a recent peaceful rally organised by us, many participants shared that they experienced a strong feeling of community and connectedness. I too like them had a similar inner catharsis experience. Our culture often fosters a sense of disconnection, separating us from each other, and from our own true selves. By marching together, we can transcend this alienation and reconnect with others (and ourselves).

3. Feeling Our Power to Change and Heal

Daniel Berrigan SJ advises that prophetic gestures aren't always politically effective. Often they appear to accomplish nothing; but he adds: "If you can't save the world at least you can save your own sanity."

The injustice and violence may continue, but we rally around in solidarity for our own sanity and healing. We are left speechless when our sanity repeatedly asks us: What are you doing as Manipur burns?



4. Going Forth into the Action that Calls Us

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on numerous occasions would say, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." When we engage in peaceful protests, the arc of our own spiritual journey bends towards justice.

Peaceful protests serve as a resounding message to those in positions of authority. Peaceful protests communicate a powerful message also to those who are at home and choose not to attend. It signals to them what they missed as they see the media coverage.

Sunil Britto

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