



Cry My beloved
Country, Cry!

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 7

INDIAN PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and friends of Edmund,

Greetings from Goa.

The good news for this month is that the monsoon has come at last and we have had more than our fair share of rain in the last few days. The not so good news is that we have a number of power outages, a few last for a couple of hours.

On the 2nd of July a Zoom meeting was held to remember Fr. Stan Swamy, the Jesuit, who spent the last years of his life in prison. Several prominent people spoke, including a representative from the United Nations. Fr. Stan spent many years living with the Adivasi tribals and speaking on behalf of their rights.

In the June Newsletter, Sr. Dorothy Fernandes, a Presentation sister, had shared on the ministry she was engaged with for the destitute people of Patna. This month there is an article by Cormac Mc Cart, a lay associate of the Edmund Rice family, on his ministry with marginalised people in Northern Ireland.

During June, we had two first mission Brothers –Sanjoy and Dilip, doing practice teaching in Regina Mundi School. Placid was their mentor and guide. The two Brothers stayed at the Edmund Rice Center in Bogmalo. Sanjoy has shared his experiences of his stay in Goa.

Two teachers from our Christian Brother schools in our Province attended a recent training program in Geneva. One of them Mrs. Joyce Pinto has shared her experiences about the program.

We had Larry Miranda with us for a few days doing a refresher course for 8 teachers in Regina Mundi. At present Senan D'Souza is with us.

Steve D'Souza has had a number of visitors in the last few days. Many of them are from Shillong.

Our prayers are with the people of Manipur. May peace return to this troubled state.

Yours fraternally

Mark



THE CHURCH COULD CHANGE-SYNODALITY IS DIFFERENT

(PART 2 OF AN ARTICLE)

This synodality is different. This time, Pope Francis is having the faithful themselves become part of the agenda-making process before the synod even convenes. The laity has been invited into the intellectual theology of the church rather than simply poised to bring pious concern to the event.

This time, the laity themselves have been deemed to determine what topics must be considered—married priests, genderism, marriage theology, equality, women priests, whatever. They will be allowed to speak to what 99% of the church rather than the 1% of the church, its clerics, allow to be heard.

In fact, churches all around the world have been gathering and detailing the items the people themselves want to see considered for timeliness, for growth, for equality. The German church, in fact, has gone so far as to film the gathering of the topics from German congregations that will be sent to Rome as the skeleton for these discussions.

Two weeks ago, I sat in front of my television for several hours and listened to the topics each of the dioceses wanted addressed at the synod in Rome. One at a time, representatives from the entire region read out the topics and the numbers of their groups who most wanted particular topics to be considered by the modern church at this new conciliar process called "synodality."

I got a chill. I was listening to a drumbeat of human issues that were separating people from the church, from support, from holiness in this day and age. The drone I was hearing was clearly the drone of the Holy Spirit: "Group A: Married priests ... women priests ... deaconesses ..." — topics from every nook and cranny in the area over and over again.

Francis had managed to involve Catholics around the globe in this common search for communal and spiritual growth.

Clearly, the meaning of *synodality* means that we must listen to one another, to the entire church, in all parts of the world for a Scripture-based following of Jesus rather



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than to the rules of a canonical institution. Instead, this church was honoring the human cry for human support in every corner of the globe.

I remembered as I sat there how my mother and father — she a young Roman Catholic widow and he a lapsed Presbyterian — had to slip into a dark sacristy one Saturday afternoon to get their "mixed marriage" fixed. Why? Who knows. So she could go to heaven, I guess. As if their marriage was itself sinful.

Not anymore.

The word *synodality* is the call to consider these evolving topics by listening, by trusting, by coming together as one single-hearted voice of God's presence in our lives as one era turns to another again.

From where I stand, synodality is a call to communion, to confirmation of the faith over the form, to holiness rather than to hierarchical power and the continuing condemnation of the two thieves, whoever they may be. It is a new model of a church that has known for centuries that this was meant to be its earlier and most effective way of following Jesus.

It is a model of Jesus and the apostles sitting on the wall of the synagogue just waiting for the chance to spread God's love and healing and care and compassion to the masses. Waiting to heal the Roman soldier, to make the Samaritan woman the apostle to the world as Jesus had ordered her to be, to feed one another always, and, in the end, to grow together.

The poet Christina Rossetti knows what it is to be caught between what should have been done but was not. And her answer is one that synodality understands: "Can anything be sadder than work left unfinished?" she writes. "Yes," she writes again: "work never begun."

May this council truly begin what the world is waiting for lest the Catholic world gets stopped in its tracks by those who do not want the church to grow with the world.

Joan Chittister

AN ADVOCACY PROJECT IN BELFAST

The Westcourt Centre is an Edmund Rice ministry based in Belfast, in the North of Ireland.

From 2008, Westcourt has worked to support people impacted by Homelessness and related issues of poverty.

We have developed the 'Still Somebody – Voices for Change' advocacy initiative and we engage with schools, local homeless services, national agencies and the mechanisms of the United Nations (via





IRISHNEWS.COM

Caring west Belfast pupils make history by addressing council chamber on homelessness

chamber. Consequently the council agreed to illuminate the City Hall building in the school colours to highlight homelessness.

We have also produced a photographic exhibition depicting homelessness which from February 2023 has been displayed in 14 locations in different cities including Belfast, Derry and Dublin. Some of the photographers involved are currently homeless and have taken

Edmund Rice International) to identify opportunities and platforms for homeless voices to be heard.

Recent examples of our work have resulted in a local Edmund Rice primary school making history as the first class of children ever to address Belfast City Councillors in the



part in public panel discussions alongside politicians and local authorities. Indeed, two of these men presented statements at the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council at the United Nations in March and the Special Rapporteur on Housing made a direct reference in his concluding remarks.

Cormac McArd
Westcourt Centre Director



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A TRAINING PROGRAM IN GENEVA

Life is full of surprises but someday everything will make perfect sense. So laugh at the confusion, smile through the tears and keep reminding yourself that everything happens for a reason.

My social justice journey began in 2007- 2008 with Brother Steve Rocha's 9 is mine initiative. My former Principal- late Mrs Christina Pereira asked me to do whatever best I could to bring awareness among students. With the handful of students and my colleague Mrs Clementine Pereira we tried to develop empathy in the hearts of our students through works of charity. It took us a decade to get the first training session for our boys in 2018 by Miss Neha Pradhan which made us aware that only charity is not enough and Rights based advocacy was the need of the hour.



During the period of 10/ 12 years many a time I personally lost hope and wanted to give up as I did not see any positive results. But there was something that kept promoting within me telling me you are the sower but can't guarantee that whatever you are sowing will bear fruit, so keep sowing in hope. Thus I continued my work and with a lot of coaxing now we have a team of 6 animators and 24 social justice representatives from classes 5 to 10. After the training in 2018-19 we were hopeful to take a leap and preparations for the same began, but COVID dashed all our efforts and we were once again back to square one.

Thanks to our former principal- Brother Anish John who motivated the whole school and brought in awareness on climate crisis by making it compulsory during value education classes. This gave us a platform to spread the Right based approach.

Then came the day when I was informed by my Principal- Brother Anish about the Geneva training, believe it or not I immediately declined the offer as I did not have a passport. Brother insisted that I should have one and initiated the process to acquire it at the earliest. Once I got my passport the process for the visa began, it was for the first time in my life I was doing things all by myself and it was a learning experience. There was a constant fear of the unknown, as it was my first international flight of which I had no clue. Friends started coaching me on the do's and don'ts. I watched some videos on security at the airport, which made me more nervous. I found myself all alone in the crowd but gathered courage and walked to collect my boarding pass, then to the security check with my heart pounding and then all of a sudden felt everything had turned peaceful and quiet.

23rd of June was the longest day of my life because the sun refused to set and it was my very first





experience to see the sun bright up in the sky at 8.30 p.m.

Meeting Miss Nisha from Kurseong and Josepha from the Philippines in Dubai was such a relief!!! The hospitality of the brothers in Geneva was incomparable. They all took care of the tiniest need of ours in the best possible way. We were at home, far away from home. Meeting the other participants from around the world was again an enriching fellowship, though from different regions and culture we all bonded well in no time. I understood that the world can be bound together only with love and concern.

The training was quite intense, the planning and implementation was impeccable. Brother Terry's session on Human Rights and the easiest way to make us understand through a game is appreciated. Br Tino's session on SDG's and advocacy, the pre-test and the post-test, his way of interaction and his style of motivating gives me a lot of hope to carry this work forward. The session which touched me the most was the session by Brother Brian Bond on spirituality and advocacy. Brother Brian led us into the session through the parable of talents from the gospel of Matthew chapter 25 verses 14 to 30. His explanation in context with the situation at Jesus's time completely changed our mind set and in all these years of my life, I never ever had thought this parable to be understood the way Brother Brian made us understand. The encouragement given to each one of us even at the smallest effort made is commendable.

Brother Terry came as a good shepherd searching for the lost sheep. Yes I was the lost sheep left alone at Bel-Air station when the group proceeded to Vermont. Thanks to Brother Terry for his love and concern, it was again an experience of being stranded, being confused and then the joy of being United. All this will remain with me for ever.

My visit to Geneva was an amazing experience. I had the opportunity to participate in the sessions of the Human Rights Council and to understand the process of the Universal Periodic Review, the



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Treaty Bodies and the Special Procedures. Through these live sessions I was given a first-hand training of the working of the UN which was an unexpected event in my life. I was fortunate to get the opportunity to read a statement and to make some recommendations to the Nations regarding climate crisis due to industrialized food production. Br Brian, Br Terry and Br Tino left no stone unturned to help us understand the process of the UPR, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures, they had invited excellent resource persons who enabled us to grasp the complexity of the work done at the UN.

Geneva is a stunning city located on the banks of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. It is known for its breath taking views of the lake and the Alps at a distance. With its stunning natural beauty, vibrant culture and iconic landmarks, Geneva is truly a city like no other.

An unexpected trip, an unexpected surprise, An unexpected friendship, An unexpected love.

Every time unexpected things make a big difference in happiness of our life.

This was truly an unexpected trip that has made a big difference in my life. I will cherish it all through my life.

Mrs Joyce Pinto

A NOTE OF APRECIATION FOR A BROTHER FROM AN EX-STUDENT

Hi Mark

The following is part of a letter from a *La Croix* editor, to whom I sent a note asking if he knew Len. The details are not relevant, but I wonder if you'd care to print Ivan's letter to me in the Newsletter, regarding Len. I think Len would be delighted to be remembered thus, and it would be good news all round.

Mac

Dear Br Mac,

There used to be a Br Noronha (from Goa) who used to teach Maths in SJC (I can't remember his first name). A great, great brother (who really got me interested in Maths (which I could never pass) but which he made so interesting that I would sit for his class just for the knowledge. He was very popular with the students too and even tried to teach me to play squash after school (which I never had the flare for).

Take care Br.

Ivan Fernandes





MY TRAINING PROGRAMME IN REGINA MUNDI SCHOOL

The only source of knowledge is experience.

It's always good to give thanks to our LORD, who has done wonders through the ages. I thank you Lord for your blessing throughout the course of the teacher training.

I, Br. Sanjoy Lugun had an exceptional experience, while undergoing the Crash course of teacher training in EDMUND RICE CENTRE, GOA. As we commenced the training, it was quite exciting, however as we continued it became pretty challenging for me. Nevertheless, it was quite productive at the end of the course.

I would like to thank our Provincial and his team for organizing such a rewarding course. I am extremely grateful to the Brothers in the Edmund Rice center for spending their time and energy, and preparing me to be an effective teacher with the potential to form the minds and hearts of children. I also appreciate the Principal of Regina Mundi School for allowing me to take classes in the school. It was truly beneficial for me to have this experience of teaching in the school. I have grown in self-confidence, learnt to become efficient in teaching and to overcome the fear of facing a class. Moreover, I am thankful to the Brothers in Regina Mundi community for being generous in sharing their knowledge and wisdom.

It was quite inspiring to see and interact with the elderly brothers in Shanti Nivas. It was such a blissful occasion for me to be around such personalities. They have really shifted my perception of life and lifted my spirits to serve our Lord, through the charism of our founder Blessed Edmund Rice with all my heart, mind and soul.

The course has not only widened my skills of teaching, but also has broadened my mind through some exposure to the various aspect of Goa such as, the delicious cuisine, the beautiful beaches, the ancient churches with their unique architecture and its culture.

When opportunities of learning knock at your door in various forms, just open the door and allow them to have their home.

Sanjoy Lugun



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THE SEASON OF CREATION

Unveiling The Significance Of A New Liturgical Season



PIC: The National Capital under water after River Yamuna breached its all-time high-water mark last month.

In a shocking report released on June 5th this year, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) revealed the alarming increase in extreme weather events during the first four months of 2023 in India. Sunita Narain, the director of CSE, expressing shock stated “Scary statistics foretell how our natural world is transforming because of climate change. In 2023, in the first four months, 70 per cent of the days have already seen extreme weather events.”

Such alarming statistics reflect the urgency of addressing the Climate crisis. Since June 2015, the Catholic Church has been actively engaged in ecological discussions and action, with religious women and men at the forefront of this movement. Among the various new changes initiated by Pope Francis, one notable change is the introduction of a new liturgical season—the Season of Creation. New times call for a new liturgical season!

Spanning 34 days, this season calls upon the planet's 2.2 billion Christians and all individuals of good will to pray for and care for God's creation. It commences on September 1st, observed as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and concludes on October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

While the Season of Creation is a new addition to the Catholic liturgical calendar, Orthodox Christians have been observing it for many years. In 1989, Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed September 1st as a Day of Prayer for Creation. That day actually marks the beginning of the Eastern Orthodox Church year. Over time, this single day of prayer evolved into a full season, with the World Council of Churches playing a leading role. In 2003, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines called upon their faithful to observe the Season of Creation (also known as Creation Time)





in their pastoral statement entitled "Celebrating Creation Day and Creation Time."

Shortly after publishing his encyclical "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home" in 2015, Pope Francis formally added the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation to the Catholic calendar as an annual day of prayer. In 2019, he officially invited Catholics to celebrate the full Season of Creation. Each year, the Ecumenical Steering Committee, a multi-denominational group proposes a theme for the Season of Creation. For the last three years, they have also suggested a symbol connected with the theme.

Recent themes were:

1999: Web of Life

2020: Jubilee for the Earth

2021: A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God (symbol : Abraham's tent)

2022: Listen to the Voice of Creation (symbol : The burning bush)

The theme for the Season of Creation in 2023 is "Let Justice and Peace Flow," accompanied by the symbol of 'a mighty river.' This theme draws inspiration from the cry of the prophet Amos, "But let justice roll on like a river" (Amos 5:24). It serves as a reminder that individual actions during the Season of Creation hold great importance, but we must also recognize the need for a powerful movement of justice. Justice includes addressing historic debts at a global level and urging nations with power and wealth to deal justly with communities most affected by the ecological crises.

Notably, the Global South nations, after more than 30 years of collaborative efforts, achieved a victory last year at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, which compelled wealthier nations to fulfil their moral duty to provide financing for ecological loss and restoration.

In his message for Creation Day 2023, Pope Francis calls upon us to "transform our hearts, lifestyles, and public policies".

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A Mighty River
Amos 5: 24

Let Justice and Peace Flow
Season of Creation 2023

PIC: The Theme for Season of Creation 2023





Here are some ways in which we can enter into these transformations:

TRANSFORMING OUR HEARTS

Host an ecumenical prayer service on Creation

This season allows for meaningful connections with Christians beyond our denomination and with all people of good will.

Hold an outdoor liturgy or prayer service

When held in places of natural beauty we can focus on expressing gratitude to God and on committing to the protection of these and other sites. If the location reflects environmental degradation, the emphasis shifts to acknowledging our collective ecological sins, and dedicating ourselves to the restoration of these sites and similar ones elsewhere.

Sign in on the Laudato Si' Action Platform as the congregation, province, community, institution or individual: <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>

Enrol in the six-week Laudato Si' Animator's training offered by Laudato Si' Movement: <https://laudatosianimators.org/>

TRANSFORMING OUR LIFESTYLES

Conduct carbon audits to identify sustainable practices we can adopt personally and collectively.

Organise or join in a cleaning drive especially near water bodies.

Plan for water conservation projects like rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling systems.

TRANSFORMING OUR PUBLIC POLICIES

Advocate for climate justice through participation in ongoing campaigns, such as the fossil fuel divestment movement.

Mobilize public opinion around the upcoming COP28 summit in Dubai, scheduled from November 30th to December 12th. Pope Francis' message for Creation Day particularly refers to COP28 where he asserts that "the world leaders who will gather for the COP28, must listen to science and institute a rapid and equitable transition to end the era of fossil fuels."

Hold public screenings of the film 'THE LETTER' which can raise public awareness and encourage dialogue.

Lastly, please incorporate the Season of Creation 2023 symbol of a mighty river in your liturgies and events. For more information and resources on the Season of Creation 2023, including the *Celebration Guide*, please visit <https://seasonofcreation.org/>.

Sunil Britto

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POETRY SECTION

TO 'NIGHTBIRDE'

*A sort-of tribute to the AGT singer
who died of cancer shortly after her song 'It's ok'.*

At best a last-minute rescue,
A bruised disillusioned but surviving me,
Not far from despair and disgust.
Add it all up – eighty-five years
Of superficiality at worst, emptiness at best
Masquerading as life.

She focused on the positive.
She ignored the strained heart.
Body and mind wracked she dismissed.
She exited dancing.

It's great to love
And to discover being loved:
Peace, a sort-of destination,
Says welcome.
But from what, to what else?

"I wrote a hundred pages
But I burned them all."
Me too, great girl, me too.
But you exited dancing.

Brendan July 2023



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Light of the Sabbath

Sacred Fridays of the Sabbath lamps,
 An aunt's faithful hands squeeze grapes
 She allows me to squeeze just a few.
 Purple juice-stained hands in purple glass,
 Steady purple flame rising to Him who listens,
 Meaning of **The Shema* revealed.
 Hebrew, English and Marathi prayers flood the room.
 God is a linguist, understands all languages,
 He doesn't need a translator.

The Sabbath done, she rubbed my hair with coconut oil,
 Sleeping with news-papered pillow till morning,
 Washing out the oil till hair lights shone
 By her same hands of faith that lit the lamps,
 Cooked red mutton curry, coconut rice
 On her room-corner kerosene stove,
 Saturday evening, the sun gone to bed.
 Those hands that move mountains
 Stirred the curry, fluffed the rice.
 'Faith may move mountains.'

The Lord said, 'Let there be light,'
 The Sabbath light, the light of a hundred and fifty Psalms,
 Her faithful reading on Saturdays.

Each Friday evening we squeezed
 The purple Grapes of Faith,
 And each Saturday she read
 All one hundred and fifty Psalms,
 Head covered with the saree scarf
 Her Godly body swaying slightly
 Lips moving in whispering prayerful devotion.

Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca

* The Shema - Jewish prayer: Hear O' Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.
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(Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca is the wife of Alan Mendonca. Alan is a former Christian Brother, who had contributed to this Newsletter a few months ago,)

