

From the Editor's Desk
PREACH WHAT YOU PRACTICE

'Do what they say and don't do what they do...' says our Lord Jesus Christ.

To whom did he say? to the disciples.

About whom did he say? about the yeast of the Pharisees.

Who were the Pharisees? They were orthodox Jews who were concerned more about the external rituals and observance of Torah – Law. They hardly had any love for fellow human persons... for them, 'man was for Sabbath'

One day a lamb was grazing in a field. Suddenly it fell into a dry pit that was dug across that grassland.

Seeing the lamb's plight, a Jew who was passing that way felt pity and jumped into the pit and rescued the lamb.

The lamb was so happy and ran briskly and immersed into her mother.

Watching this redeeming act of the merciful Jew, a Pharisee became furious and slapped him shouting "hey, have you gone mad to restore that lamb from that pit today being Sabbath day? Do you not know that you should not profane the sacred law of Sabbath?"

The good Jew said, "Sorry sir, for me human compassion, even to an ant, is more important than Sabbath...For me love is more significant than what you claim observance of law". At this answer, the sun set on the face of the fundamentalist.

But bottling up all his fury walked ahead to take this matter to the Jewish seniors.

'I desire mercy and not sacrifice' says Jesus (Mt.9:13)

'Mercy is everything' Ps.100:5.

A religious sacrifice is an external act of worship to god by offering and burning the fruit of the nature or slaughtering animals such as goat, lamb, calf, cow, chicks in order to appease god's anger or to please Him.

The Jews were performing different sacrifices like burnt offering, sacrifice of reparation for sins, sacrifice of atonement, sacrifice of thanksgiving and so on.

The rising up of smoke that comes out from the burnt offerings or living creatures was considered important for salvation of man. The higher the smoke rises, deeper the acceptance of it by god. This has been the case in every religious rituals and belief. A perfect example is: Abel and Cain. Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was a tiller of the ground. While God respected Abel's offering of *firstlings*, He did not respect an offering of the ground by Cain. This led to Cain's jealousy and he killed Abel his own brother. So, where is the fraternal love behind his sacrifice of offering?

We are all worried about external cleanliness(of course, in India, people are not so much bothered about garbage, sewage water outburst, gutter, trash, stinking streets, street water stagnancy, public littering etc)... Individually we claim we are very clean and look down upon others..... Read what Jesus says quoting Isaiah,

"You hypocrites, Prophet Isaiah rights prophesied of you,

'This people honour Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me,

And in vain do they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrine the commandment of men'.

For laying aside the commandment of God,

you hold the tradition of men" Mk.7:6-8

Jesus lays emphasis on the importance of inner purification more than external observance of traditions.

We (Bishops, priests, nuns, lay faithful) need to amend our old ways, mend our broken hearts and end all our pranks during this Lent.

A Tibetan girl in great distress, approached a Catholic priest and underwent a series of counselling and later she was baptised a Catholic. Once she met me and asked me if offering sacrifices was mandatory for man's salvation.

Whatever religious ritual you perform externally should correspond to your external action. Love and mercy must be the basis for all our external sacrifices.

The Good Samaritan story is the best example as how to put mercy at the top of our ritual acts. "Lk.10:29-37.

But often in our human life, mercy and compassion take the last place. The first place goes to money, then to power and position, then to one's caste creed and language, and so on.

This is quite common even among priests, pastors and leaders of the Church groups. If a Christian fails to show mercy and compassion to his neighbour it is probably because the leaders – bishops, priests, pastors, religious men and women have failed to set an example at all times in their ministerial life.

Are you aware of what St.Paul said regarding his preaching ministry? "**Woe to me if I do not preach.....**" I Cor 9:16

St.Paul would have written thus if he were here today, 'Also woe to those bishops, priests, nuns and lay faithful who preach and practice fundamentalism or extremism of religion, language, caste and rite. Woe to those leaders of the Church who misguide people and swallow the wealth of the church'

He also writes, '**Among the weak I become weak in order to win them. So I become all things to all people that I might by all means save some'** I Cor 9:22

We might have preached this verse to people so many times, but without personal application or internalization.

Today we don't win people by our love and compassion instead we defeat them by our money power, by our position, by our caste, by our language etc.. We drive them away because they are weak.... We follow what we say 'might is right' or 'survival of the fittest' So where is the Christian spirit among the religious and faithful?

May this holy season of Lent (2012) take us to real transformation of our hearts.

Practicing first what we preach will win the world to Christ. Let all our rituals, prayers, way of the cross, fasting be secondary to merciful act and justice to the weak and the oppressed.

Fr.J.A.Nathan
Editor

HOLY SEASON OF LENT

Lent in 2012 will start on Wednesday, the **22nd of February** and will continue for 46 days until Saturday, the **7th of April**.

In Western Christianity Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Saturday. The six Sundays in Lent are not counted among the forty days of lent because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter", a celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death.

The True Meaning of Lent

What is Lent? Why is it so widely practiced by “Christians” of this world? Is it because the Bible commands it? Did Christ or any of His apostles observe Lent? What about the first century Church? What does the Bible teach about Lent?

Unlike New Year’s, Christmas, St. Valentine’s Day and other pagan holidays that are celebrated by the secular, non-religious world, the Lenten season is observed by dedicated religious believers.

From Ash Wednesday to Easter, many solemnly mark their foreheads with ash, “fasting” (or abstaining from certain foods or physical pleasures) for 40 days. This is done to supposedly imitate Jesus Christ’s 40-day fast in the wilderness ([Matt. 4:1-2](#)). Some give up smoking. Others give up chewing gum. Still others give up over-eating or cursing. People vow to give up anything, as long as it prepares them for Easter.

Examining Lent’s Purpose

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “the real aim of Lent is, above all else, to prepare men for the celebration of the death and Resurrection of Christ...the better the preparation the more effective the celebration will be.

One can effectively relive the mystery only with purified mind and heart. The purpose of Lent is to provide that purification by weaning men from sin and selfishness through self-denial and prayer, by creating in them the desire to do God’s Will and to make His kingdom come by making it come first of all in their hearts.”

First, understand that the “celebration of the death and Resurrection of Christ” to which the preceding quote refers is so-called “Good Friday” and “Easter Sunday”—holidays deeply rooted in ancient paganism. They were instituted by mainstream Christianity in order to counterfeit and replace the Passover season. Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread were observed by Christ, the original apostles and the New Testament Church—including Gentiles. God commands His people to observe them today ([I Cor. 5:7-8](#)).

Second, the Bible says that we are purified—cleansed, set apart and made pure in God’s sight—by the shed blood of Jesus Christ ([Heb. 9:11-14, 22; 13:12](#)). This, along with faith ([Acts 15:9](#)) and humbly submitting to and obeying God ([James 4:7-10](#)) through His truth and prayer ([John 17:17; I Tim. 4:5](#)), makes us clean before God.

Only through a converted mind, actively led by the Holy Spirit, can God work “in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” ([Phil. 2:13](#)).

So where did Lent originate? How did it come to be so widely observed by mainstream Christianity?

Approved by Official State Religion

Believe it or not, Lent was never observed by Christ or His apostles. He commanded His disciples to “Go you therefore, and teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)). Jesus never commanded them to observe Lent or Easter. He did, however, command them to keep Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. In fact, during His last Passover on earth, Christ gave detailed instructions on how to observe the Passover service. He also instituted new Passover symbols ([John 13:1-17](#)).

Notice what Alexander Hislop wrote in his book *The Two Babylons*: “The festival, of which we read in Church history, under the name of Easter, in the third and fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Roman Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter... That festival [Passover] was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent. ‘It ought to be known,’ said Cassianus, the monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century, and contrasting the primitive [New Testament] Church with the Church of his day, ‘that the observance of the forty days had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate.’”

Lent was not observed by the first century Church! It was first addressed by the church at Rome during the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, when Emperor Constantine officially recognized that church as the Roman Empire’s state religion. Any other form of Christianity that held to doctrines contrary to the Roman church was considered an enemy of the state.

In A.D. 360, the Council of Laodicea officially commanded Lent to be observed.

Originally, people did not observe Lent for more than a week. Some kept it for one or two days. Others kept it for 40 consecutive hours, falsely believing that only 40 hours had elapsed between Christ's death and resurrection.

Eventually, it became a 40-day period of fasting or abstaining from certain foods. "The emphasis was not so much on the fasting as on the spiritual renewal that the preparation for Easter demanded.

Today, Lent is used for "fasting from sin and from vice...forsaking sin and sinful ways." It is a season "for penance, which means sorrow for sin and conversion to God." This tradition teaches that fasting and employing self-discipline during Lent will give a worshipper the "control over himself that he needs to purify his heart and renew his life."

However, the Bible clearly shows that self-control—temperance—comes from having God's Holy Spirit working in the life of a converted mind ([Gal. 5:16, 17, 22](#)). Fasting—of and by itself—cannot produce godly self-control.

Paul warned against using self-denial as a tool to rely on your own will. He called it "will worship." "Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh" ([Col. 2:20-23](#)).

God's people humble themselves through fasting in order *to draw closer to Him*—so that they can learn to think and act like Him—so that they can live His way of life in all things. Notice what the prophet Jeremiah wrote: "***Thus says the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the LORD***" ([9:23-24](#)). Fasting (and prayer) helps Christians draw closer to God.

Lent's Ancient Roots

Coming from the Anglo-Saxon *Lencten*, meaning "spring," Lent originated in the ancient Babylonian mystery religion. "The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess...Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been

As usual this year too on 22 Jan (2012), the Ecumenical Prayer for Christian Unity in view of the Unity Octave was organized at St.Anne's School Hall, situated at Cambridge Road, Ulsoor (near Ulsoor Police station) Bangalore.

The half an hour praise and worship led by Bro.Bhakianathan of Praise Jesus Ministries was so touching with his vibrant singing that the participants in the hall reached their high spiritual spirit.



The Prayer Meet began exactly at 4.30 pm. The **English Choir from St.Peter's Church Rustambagh**, sang the invocation song and it was followed by



welcome address by Rev.M.C.Prasad, CSI, (President BZUCFHR). Then came the **Introductory address** in which Rev.Samuel Rajkumar, Lutheran, (Treasurer, BZUCFHR) mentioned a brief background for the theme "WE WILL ALL BE CHANGED BY THE VICTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" I Cor 15:53-58 And there on begun the Prayer service proper

In fact, the resources for the Prayer for Unity 2012 and throughout the year, was jointly prepared and published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and World Council of Churches.



Fr.J.Arokianathan, Archdiocese of Bangalore (Secretary, BZUCFHR) presided over the service.

The service was multi-lingual and was attended by over 200 people and pastors from various denominations belonging to RC, CSI, Lutheran, FCCO, Baptist, Mar Thoma, AG, and Religious Nuns and CRI Brothers (Catholic Religious of India) and some independent ministries and Bible Society of India (Hall Road).

While Mr.Chinnaiah of the Rajajinagar Kannada Brethren Assembly read the **Kannada reading followed by Kannada song by Bro.Bhakianathan of Praise Jesus Ministries,**



Mr.AK.Vincent from the Praise Jesus Ministries read **Tamil reading** followed by Tamil hymn and the gospel reading was done by Mrs.Evang.Mira Bhupathi, (Joint Secretary, BZUCFHR).The enriching sharing of the Word of God by



Rev.Jessie Ranjan(CSI) in Kannada,
Rev.Harrys Pereira (FCCO) in English and



Rev.Samuel Rajkumar (Lutheran) in Tamil was a great boost to

our souls. All the preachers spoke about the need for our unity. Quoting St.Paul I Cor 12 they said, 'though the gifts are many, Holy Spirit is one, the mission also is one and as human organs are many and varied, they belong to one body. Similarly, the body of Christ is one but the members are of various denominations and divisions. Jesus brought forth victory to mankind only by his struggle and suffering on the cross. He prayed, 'Holy Father, as You and I are one, may they also be one' (Jn.17). The preachers recalled the priestly prayer of Jesus and invited the participants to join hands together and walk in the footsteps of Christ towards the unity that He expects of us.

It was an awesome experience of unity in Christ singing '**We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord**' led by the CRI (Catholic Religious of India) Brothers from Ulsoor.



The singing was followed by **Prayer for Unity and Transformation** led by two youth Mr.Conrad and Ms.Priya. Later there was multilingual intercessory prayer. One representative from the following Churches prayed for two minutes spontaneously for various intentions(concerns) such as **For Universal Church....RC Church** by Bridgitine Rev.Sr.Glaudys (in English), **For Christianity in India** by Mr.Jayaraj, FCCO.....(in Kannada), **For Christians facing persecution** by Mrs.Ludwig (in Hindi), **For greater unity among church denominations specifically for our Forum** by Rev.Daniel Jesudass of Baptist Church(in Tamil), **For little children and students facing exams** by Mrs.Akkamma John of Mar Thoma (in Malayalam) and **For our leaders in India** by Mrs.Indira Peter CSI member.....(in Telugu).

Another highlight of the evening prayer for Unity was: **RESOLUTION PLEDGE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY** (with candle lights) led by Rev.Harrys Pereira of FCCO and this was followed by final prayer and benediction by the celebrant Fr.J.Arokianathan.

After the vote of thanks by Rev.Daniel Jesudass (Vice President, BZUCFHR) the whole service came to an end with **Bind Us together Lord** singing and fellowship snacks and tea.



While I most sincerely thank all those who participated in this Meet, I would like to bring before you my review point as secretary of the Forum:

This prayer meet for Christian unity was well experienced and appreciated by everyone who attended (only around 200 people)....but many more should have come.... Catholic participation was more than any other denomination as usual. It was felt as if the effort for Christian unity is an agenda only of Catholic Church and not of others because the Catholic participation in this Unity Octave Prayer Meet was more than denominational

Christians. This is the case in any ecumenical event in the Bangalore Metropolitan. Moreover the enthusiasm for ecumenism whether among Catholic leaders or non-Catholic denominational leaders is weaning little by little despite of every effort. Of course no one is bothered about this because every Christian sect is busy and interested in the development of its own church group. There is a lack of zeal for Christian universal mission but a parochial mission. Perhaps we need more attacks and persecution from external world on Christianity overall for a stronger unity. We don't make hue and cry even if there is one as we are not bound by any force or urge for stronger unity as Christ is bit far from us. Hence there is a sincere request to everyone who reads this report henceforth to come along with more common faithful from Church groups and not merely one two usual representatives.

Please make a strong decision to cooperate with us for any ecumenical activities without any expectation of personal mileage but for the greater glory of God and for the welfare of our Christian Community in Bangalore Zone.

My sincere thanks to you for all your cooperation in the last 3 and half years

*God Bless you
In the spirit of Christian unity*

*Fr.J.AROKIANATHAN
SEC, BZUCFHR
Email: nathanvatican@yahoo.com
Mob: 9740203056, 080-2526 4343*

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Christmas Tableau

Santa Clause with children

Altar boys dance animated by Mr.Pradeep a dance master from the parish, Christmas messages by Rev.Fr.J.Arokianathan, Parish priest, Rev.Mohanraj CSI, Rev.Daniel Jesudass Baptist Church, Mrs.Mira Bhupathi AG Church were some of the important items of that evening. Mr.Tommy Suraj who played the Santa Clause amused the crowd by his presence and sweets to children. While Mr.Roy D'Cuhna anchored the program the Parish priest Fr.J.Arokianathan looked after every arrangement including a delicious Christmas snacks for all. *Thanks to Mr.Mathew Pushparaj for sponsoring Christmas cake and coffee on the Christmas night for 400 people.*

To disseminate the Vincentian Spirit of Christian charity our parish Vincenr de Paul Society had arranged distribution of Christmas gifts with Gift hampers worth Rs 500/- that include blankets, cake, chicken, rice dal (red gram) sugar maida and oil provisions, cake for fifteen adopted families and twenty five other poor families of our parish including Hindus and Muslims by our beloved parish priest and spiritual director Rev Fr J Arokianathan. From the bottom of our heart we Vincentians thank all the donors who contributed their mite to make this event possible



*St.V.de.Paul Charity by the PP
sojourner*



Bro.Benny Prasad , international

Bro Benny Prasad's testimony was really an eye opener for the depressed and the disappointed that helped to meet the challenges of life courageously with Jesus. He has travelled all alone to more than 200 nations attracting the youth world with his multi-instrumental guitar music performance. Great is his courage to preach the Word of God even in pagan world.

While the English Choir who won many trophies in the archdiocesan range for their excellent participation and performance, sang so beautifully the Christmas carols



English Choir in their high spirit



Praise Jesus Ministries in our church

Whereas now the Church of St.Peter, Rsuambagh is getting through with new Church building on the present structure, it will have a new vigour and spirit in few months time.

Thanks to everyone in it.

I.Stephen
St.Vincent de Paul Society activist

WELCOME TO THE 21ST CENTURY!
OUR PHONES - WIRELESS!
COOKING - FIRELESS!
CARS - KEYLESS!
FOOD - FATLESS!
DRESS - SLEEVELESS !
YOUTH - JOBLESS!
LEADERS - SHAMELESS!
RELATIONSHIPS - MEANINGLESS!
ATTITUDE - CARELESS!
WIVES - FEARLESS!
FEELINGS - HEARTLESS!
EDUCATION - VALUELESS!
CHILDREN - MANNERLESS !

EVERYTHING IS BECOMING LESS BUT STILL,
OUR HOPES ARE - ENDLESS.

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INDIA : Simplicity and zeal mark India's cardinal elect (UCAN via CNUA)

Cardinal designate Alencherry was born on April 19, 1945, in Thuruthy in Kerala's Changanassery archdiocese, one of 10 children born to local farmers. His elder brother joined the seminary and his father could not afford to send him as well.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, (CBCI) the apex body of the Catholic Church in India is delighted to learn that Mar George Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has been elevated to the status of Cardinal by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on January 6, 2012.

In his capacity as the head of Syro-Malabar Church, he is a permanent member of the CBCI Standing Committee and also shoulders many other responsibilities in the Church in India. The Catholic Church in India has about 18 million members.

INDIA : International Conference on Ecumenism Held by Sr. Teresa Joseph FMA, Pune (CBCI News via CNUA) The International Conference on Ecumenism was inaugurated on January 6 at Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth, Pune. The Conference on Ecumenism brought together speakers from Rome, Vienna, Leuven, Switzerland, Ethiopia, and from various parts of India. The seminar dealt with topics such as: Ecumenism of Interaction and Co-operation An Orthodox Perspective, Progress Made in the Millennium in the Dialogue Between Orthodox and Catholic Churches, Primacy and Conciliarity Revisited With Special Reference to Indian Context, Pro-Oriente's Contribution in the Areas of Ecumenism

INDIA : Should priests be in politics? by Dr. Ambrose Pinto SJ (GOA HERALD via CNUA) Father Bismarque Dias is a candidate of the civil society group for contesting the Cumbharjua constituency for the forthcoming Goa State elections. It is a normal practice that priests cannot be in active politics according to the law of the Church. Fr. Bismarque knows about it and has said he would request the Archbishop to give him permission, given the situation of corruption and commercialization of resources in Goa. The Archbishop has rightly made a statement that Fr. Bismarque who belongs to a religious congregation should obtain permission from the religious congregation he belongs to. In the situation how should Fr Bismarque respond?

The Law of the Church binds all those who voluntarily belong to the Church. Fr. Bismarque, is a priest of the Church. But because of this, does he lose his rights as a citizen? If he exercises his civil right to contest elections, he would likely be dismissed from his clerical status, because he has voluntarily decided not to be a part of partisan politics.

The relevant question is whether Church Law should take over his rights as a citizen? Before responding to the question, it is necessary to raise questions on the context of the Canon Law. It was primarily formulated for the situation of the West. The Church was a powerful institution and had multiple powers. As Christian nations they could decide the future of individuals while protecting common interests. There were enough of responsible lay persons who could protect human values of honesty and integrity and be true to their own conscience. In the situation, if a priest had to jump into elections, he would likely prove to be divisive in polity and society and instead of serving the church as a unifier; he could become a divider with party loyalty. Canon Law does not allow priests to contest elections in that scenario which is perfectly unobjectionable.

The situation in India is different. In spite of powerful institutions, social centres and primary health care centres managed by the church, the contribution of the community has not even been recognized. Catholic politicians in Goa have been looting and plundering precious

resources. The priest is not contesting as a candidate of any party. He is a candidate of civil society. His contest, therefore, will not be divisive or political in that sense. He favours none but only the civil society.

The canon law strictly should not be applied in this situation. When the poor and the deprived do not have candidates who could represent them, since elections in India are expensive and they are unable to represent themselves, it would be a good gesture to allow Fr. Bismarque to contest the elections if his credentials are what the media highlight. Of course, there is no doubt that priests should not contest as members of a political party. (*This ia an article that appeared in Goa's Herald the largest circulated daily.*) Fr. Ambrose Pinto's email ; p_ambrose@hotmail.com

PERSECUTION

PAKISTAN : Multan, a missionary priest arrested for "illegal residency" by Shafique Khokhar Multan (AsiaNews) Pakistani authorities have arrested Fr. Christi Silva, Director of Formation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), for "illegal residence" in Multan, Punjab province. The arrest took place ON 23.1.2012. The previous day, Tuesday, Jan. 24, police detained the priest and opened an investigation against him - FIR, First Information Report - in accordance with sections 13 and 14 of the Aliens Act of 1946. Local sources tell AsiaNews that on the morning of January 24 the police arrived at Mary Church, to meet Father Christi and inform him that his visa had expired on June 22 last. The police, witnesses said, threw the priest in jail without even looking at the documents, opening an FIR for "illegal residency".

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50 year Old Agnes Bibi (Nugo) accused in blasphemy case released on bail



Pakistan, January 29, 2012: She was charged at police station sadar Faisalabad against a Christian woman Agnes Bibi 50 years old and now she is on bail and the trial of the case is held in Faisalabad Court. The charge of the case against Agnes Bibi was also reduced after conducting investigation and co-operation of Christians and Muslims living in the same locality. She said that the Charge was reduced in lesser degree of punishment but she is still receiving death threats from militants and also her family bearing the agony due to this blasphemy case.

On 16 February 2011, there was registered one blasphemy case no 136/11 at police station sadar Faisalabad against a Christian woman Agnes Bibi 50 years old and now she is on bail and the trial of the case is running in Faisalabad Court. The charge of the case against Agnes bibi was also reduced after conducting investigation and co-operation of Christians and Muslims living in the same locality.

Agnes Bibi requested on phone to see with Missionary Pastor Mushtaq Gill and also requested for legal support as well as financial support for medical treatment and the loan which her family took from some persons for legal expenses of the case. she also requested that she has no money to pay the fee of the lawyers and other expenses of the court.

She told that the Charge was reduced in lesser degree of punishment but she is still receiving death threats from militants and also her family bearing the agony due to this blasphemy case. She also told that no NGO or any church is supporting to her. She also added that she herself and her family are paying all expenses of the court etc due to which now they heavy loans and now are under heavy debts. Missionary Pastor Mushtaq Gill, president of has assured that LEAD must give her free legal support and also will try to arrange some safe place for her life and her family.

Saudi Arabia: Christians beaten and jailed for praying

Despite recent gestures towards multi-culturalism and religious tolerance, Saudi Arabia's police continue to deal punitively with practitioners of non-Muslim faiths.

Posted on February 1, 2012, 8:40 PM



Beirut:

Thirty five Ethiopian Christians are awaiting deportation from Saudi Arabia for “illicit mingling,” after police arrested them when they raided a private prayer gathering in Jeddah in mid-December, 2011, Human Rights Watch said today. Of those arrested, 29 were women. They were subjected to arbitrary body cavity searches in custody, three of the Ethiopians told Human Rights Watch.

The Ethiopians gathered to pray together on December 15, during the advent of Christmas, in the private home of one of the Ethiopians, when police burst in and arrested them, three jailed members of the group, two women and one man, told Human Rights Watch.

In October, Saudi Arabia, together with Austria and Spain, founded the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, located in Vienna, and funded by Saudi Arabia.

Source: [Human Rights Watch](#)

VATICAN : PRIESTS SHOULD PROMOTE SANCTITY WITH THEIR OWN LIVES

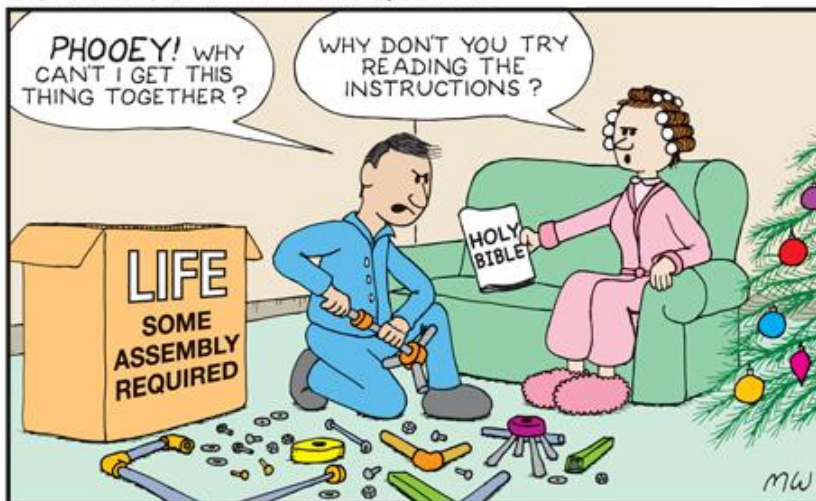
(VIS via CNUA) The Holy Father received superiors and seminarians from three Italian regional pontifical seminaries in Assisi, Catanzaro and Naples.

Referring to the seminarians' formation, Benedict XVI highlighted how today's cultural context calls for "solid education in philosophy and theology". Future priests must, he said, "understand and appreciate the internal structure of the faith as a whole, so that it can become a response to people's questions. ... And the study of theology must always have an intense bond to the life of prayer. ... It is, in fact, vital that the multiple activities of a priest's ministry be harmoniously integrated with his spiritual life.

"It is important", the Holy Father added, "for the priest, who is called to accompany others through the journey of life up to the threshold of death, to have the right balance of heart and mind, reason and feeling, body and soul, and to be humanly integrated". For this reason, the Pope said, great attention must be given to "the human dimension when forming candidates to the priesthood. Anyone who wishes to become a priest must be first and foremost a 'man of God'. ... It follows that the most important thing in our path towards priesthood and during the whole of our priestly lives is our personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ".

In conclusion, the Holy Father quoted a phrase of John XXII: "Even more than cultured, eloquent, up-to-date priests, what we need are saintly and sanctifying priests".

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED



Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. — PROVERBS 3:5-6 NIV

Monkey Business



Yes, that is, see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil followed by three monkeys sitting together. One closes its eyes with its hands, other closes his ears with his hands and the last monkey closes his mouth with his hands which clearly shows the above, isn't it? In this modern world, if I say that 90% people are following the above said monkey business will it be wrong?

Whenever or wherever we see a person lying on the footpath or on the road, do we care to check as to why he is lying on the road or if we see something is going wrong do we open our mouth to say the right thing? Or, if we hear a wrong thing through someone we pretend that we have not heard anything against so and so. We do all these things because we want to avoid problems for us, to save time and not get involved in unwanted (what we perceive as) thing. Are we not following the above like the monkeys did?

Being followers of Christ Jesus, if we also do this then we are certainly not true followers of Jesus who sacrificed his life on the cross for the salvation of mankind. Decide what you would want or like to be!

Col.J.M.Lobo

INDIA : Stop Koodankulam Nuclear Plant by Paulsamy, President, Ramnad Fish workers Union



We the fisher people in Ramnad do not want Koodankulam Nuclear Plant because of the following reasons:

1. 1962 Atomic Energy Act is to keep Nuclear Energy production under confidentiality. Why do you keep this confidential when other Electrical Energies are not confidential. Atomic energy comes under defense. The expenses are not audited and made it public. In spite all these years of production of nuclear energy the total amount comes only 3000 MW. Will anybody show the expenses of all the investments of Atomic Infrastructure in India?
2. Nobody in the world has found out any technology to dispose of Nuclear waste. The nuclear waste is sealed in steel containers and buried under ground or in the sea. The emission of radiation remains in the waste for thousands of years.

3. Fifty nine out of 103 nuclear plants in the US rely on what are known as 'once through cooling systems' to remove waste heat. Nuclear plant authorities have always claimed that their intake and discharge of billions of litres of water a day did very little harm to the surrounding marine life.

4. Some years ago, a major report, LICENCED TO KILL: HOW THE NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY DESTROY ENDANGERED MARINE WILD LIFE AND OCEAN HABITAT TO SAVE MONEY, released by the well respected Nuclear Information and Resource Service on February 22, 2001." These cooling systems suck in and discharge as much as four million litres of water per minute. This water is sucked in at such a high velocity that along with the water, marine life is also sucked in, it is unable to resist velocity. These are dumped back as dead. That the nuclear sea high destruction rates can over take recovery rates, resulting in extensive depletion of the affected species. In this way, entire marine life communities can lose their capacity to sustain themselves."

5. "While millions of litres of hot water being discharged into the sea every minute, the total heat dumped into the waterway every minute is tremendous. Roger Witherspoon, the well known US journalist, author and editor, in a recent article has given some figures. Citing company records, he points out that the nuclear power plants, at Salem, New Jersey, USA, dump about 30 billion BTUs of heat hourly into Delaware Bay. That is equivalent of the heat which would be generated by exploding a nuclear bomb, the size of the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima, in the waters of Delaware Bay every two hours, all day, every day." Roger Witherspoon, 'Ravishing the waterways, DEP vs the power Plants' Dec 13, 2010., <http://www.nirs.org/reactorwatch>.

6. The safety of the plant is not sure after Three Mile Island Disaster in the USA, Chernobyl Disaster in Russia, Fukushima Disaster in Japan. We cannot trust the GOI any more after seeing the way GOI has handled Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

Alternatives to Nuclear Power in the 21st Century

1. In India the present production is 160000 MW. The total need of India is 400.000 MW. Govt. of India expects 10% of this is from Nuclear Energy, by 2020. Even this will not be realised according to the present way of implementing Nuclear Reactors in India. Haripur is cancelled. Jaithapur is in trouble. Koodankulam is in trouble. Since 1962 after enacting Atomic Energy Act, 5000 MW has been the total production. In fact if GOI improves the transmission of the present production, and the use of electricity, bulbs, pumps, ACs etc we can save up to 30-40% through conservation technologies. This saving is more important than nuclear and thermal production. The cost of efficiency improvement is cheaper than putting up new nuclear and thermal plants.

2. Wind energy and Solar energy are the most safe energy today in the World. Bangalore is progressing with Solar Energy by producing 900 MW Electricity. Tamilnadu and Kerala are progressing with Wind energy. The major energy in Australia is Wind energy. Germany has installed the biggest Solar Energy plant in Vatican. If GOI invests money on infrastructure for Solar and Wind energy in the way GOI invested in Atomic Energy India can progress very fast in Wind energy and solar energy. America is the largest Wind Energy producer. Potential from Wind Energy in India is 100,000 MW. The potential from Solar Energy is 400,000 MW. There is no risk involved in this. But investment in research and infrastructure should be done.

3. Another Energy GOI can progress is in the line of Bio Gas Energy. If we make use of human excreta, animal excreta, and vegetable waste India can progress very fast not only in the production of energy but also does cleaning up of the whole environment. The potential is 100,000 MW.

Whatever Energy we produce it should not affect the environment either by pollution or by radiation. In the long run the quality of energy we produce are more important than the quantity, which will create climate change, the destruction of the World. The MNCs in the Nuclear Energy are very powerful and they are corrupt by giving commissions to the political parties and bureaucrats. If there are powerful peoples movements these corruptions can be stopped. This is the beginning of the production of alternative energy.

RFU wants the following demands met:

1. Alot 1000 MW electricity to Tamilnadu from the Central Pool.
 2. Distribute CFL bulbs to every family in Tamilnadu free of charge.
 3. The traditional fishermen should have to right to fish in the Marine Protected Areas for their livelihood.
 4. Lift the ban on Sea cucumber.
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Catholic bishops convene biennial meet

Posted on February 1, 2012, 8:22 PM



Bangalore:

Cardinal Oswald Gracias today called the Church “the conscience of the nation” during his presidential speech at the opening of the 30th general body meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) in Bangalore.

During his speech, he called for the Church as a whole to meditate on what it has done for good and where it has failed.

Noting that the CBCI is committed to the welfare of the nation and its people, Cardinal Gracias said “we will dedicate all our energies towards that goal.”

The cardinal, who is also the archbishop of Mumbai, said the growing gap between the rich and poor was one of the biggest challenges facing the nation.

He regretted that the opportunities offered in the country were limited to the rich and the prosperous.

Cardinal Gracias expressed the hope that the biennial meeting, which had as its theme “The church’s role for a better India,” will generate enthusiasm and hope among the Christian community.

A record 170 bishops and church leaders from different dioceses of the country are attending the February 1-8 meeting in Bangalore, called the Vatican of the East.

The proceedings began with Mass of the Holy Spirit led by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio.

He urged the Christian community in the country to work with “single-heartedness” and without expecting honor or profit for a better future for all.

In his keynote address, Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, called the Christian leaders to be “trustworthy in the household of God and to themselves.”

He reminded the leaders that God has entrusted the people into their hands and it was the responsibility of the leaders not to abuse that trust.

Archbishop Albert D’Souza, secretary general of the CBCI, presented the bishops’ report for the year 2010-2011 during the inaugural meeting.

The CBCI is an umbrella organization of all the Catholic bishops of India, belonging to the Latin, the Syro-Malabar and the Syro-Malankara Rites.

Source: ucanews.com

தமிழில் செய்திகள் Thamizhil Seithigal News in Tamil

இவாஞ்சலிக்கல் சபைப் போதகரை இந்துத் தீவிரவாதிகள் நிர்வாணமாக்கி அடித்துள்ளனர்

சன.28,2012. கர்நாடக மாநிலத்தில், 27 வயது நிரம்பிய Chandrakanth Kalappa Chavan என்ற கிறிஸ்தவ சபைப் போதகரை, இந்துத் தீவிரவாதிகள் நிர்வாணமாக்கி, மானமிழக்கச் செய்து, அடித்து, கேலி செய்து, நான்கு மணி நேரங்களுக்கு ஒரு கம்பத்தில் கட்டிப் போட்டிருந்தனர் என்று பீதேஸ் செய்தி நிறுவனம் அறிவித்தது.

Uttara Kannada மாவட்டத்தில், Haliyal என்ற நகரத்திலுள்ள இந்துத் தீவிரவாதக் குடும்பல் ஒன்று, " New Life Fellowship" என்ற இவாஞ்சலிக்கல் கிறிஸ்தவ சபையைச் சேர்ந்த இப்போதகரை, அக்குடும்பல், வார்த்தைகளால் விவரிக்க முடியாத இத்தகைய கொடுமைக்கு உள்ளாக்கியிருக்கிறது என்று அச்செய்தி நிறுவனம் மேலும் அறிவித்தது.

இம்மாதம் 24 ம் தேதி ஒரு கிறிஸ்தவப் பெண்ணின் வீட்டில் செபம் நடந்து கொண்டிருந்த போது, சுமார் 20 தீவிரவாதிகள் சேர்ந்து இதனைச் செய்துள்ளனர்.

இந்தியாவில் கிறிஸ்தவர்க்கெதிரான வன்முறைகள் அதிகரித்து வரும்தேவை, 2011ம் ஆண்டில், இரண்டாயிரத்துக்கு அதிகமான வன்முறை நிகழ்வுகள் இடம் பெற்றுள்ளன. இவற்றில், கர்நாடக மாநிலத்தில் மட்டும், ஒரு நாளைக்கு 3 முதல் 5 வீதம் ஆயிரத்துக்கு மேற்பட்ட தாக்குதல்கள் இடம் பெற்றுள்ளன என்று ஒரு கத்தோலிக்க அரசு-சாரா அமைப்பு அறிவித்தது.