From the Editor's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I regret for the absence of February issue of The KEY as there was undue delay in printing the journal. However we bring this issue as FEB-MARCH issue dedicated to the holy season of Lent.

Roberto was leading a lose life. He hardly attended the Sunday service as he concentrated on his own personal business and hedonistic life. Then, he came to know the coming of the season of Lent; he came to his sense. His family people prompted him to attend the Ash Wednesday Mass. He received the holy ash from the priest, prayed well and took a decision to attend regularly Sunday Mass, say the Lenten prayers, fasting and other Lenten activities. He became so devote along with his family that he did not miss any Way of the Cross on Lenten Fridays. He participated in the Good Friday fasting and service. The feast of Easter came and went. He took part in all the activities the Holy week. He was very happy that he fulfilled the Lenten obligations.

Now this man Roberto, who was so devote and committed to Lenten penance, felt a great force within to go back to his old lose life with his usual habits of drinking, lustful activities, defrauding practises and so on. He thought, lent is only for 40 days and one could go back to the usual sinful habits and lose life after that.

This is what many of our Catholic faithful do. External practices should lead an individual to internal conversion.

You ride your cart (life) placing the bullocks in the front and the cart at the back, during Lent, the normal way. But afterwards, you place the cart in the front and the bullocks at the back.... a contradictory living style.

Jesus Christ says, "Repent and believe the Gospel as the Kingdom of God is at hand" Mk.1:15.

Well the season of Lent calls for change of heart, change of life style, from bad to good, from disgrace to grace, from dark to light, from death to life, from world to God.

In the Book of Joel, God calls the people of Israel for change of heart.

The Season of Lent

Theme:

Retreating Into the Wilderness with Jesus

Dates:

Lent is a forty-day period before Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday. We skip Sundays when we count the forty days, because Sundays commemorate the Resurrection. Lent begins on 9 March 2011 and ends on 23 April 2011, which is the day before Easter.

In the Roman Catholic Church, Lent officially ends at sundown on 21 April (Holy Thursday), with the beginning of the mass of the Lord's Supper.

Colors:

In most churches, the decorations are purple, the royal color, to prepare for the King. You can read <u>more about color in worship</u>

Scripture Readings:

The Revised Common Lectionary appoints Scripture readings for use in worship during the Season of Lent.

The East:

In Orthodox churches, this season is called the Great Lent. It begins on Clean Monday.

Special Days:

Ash Wednesday, 9 March 2011

The Annunciation, 25 March

Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual

Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days. All churches that have a continuous history extending before AD 1500 observe Lent. The ancient church that wrote, collected, canonized, and propagated the New Testament also observed Lent, believing it to be a commandment from the apostles. (See *The Apostolic Constitutions*, Book V, Section III.)

If your church does not observe Lent, you can find out why.

You can <u>read about fasting</u>, which is a spiritual discipline that does not involve starvation or dehydration. You can also read <u>Honest to God</u> for an explanation of what we accomplish by observing Lent.

You can find out about <u>Lenten fasting during medieval times</u> . The link even includes a very interesting recipe!

The Western Church

Because Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, we skip over Sundays when we calculate the length of Lent. Therefore, in the Western Church, Lent always begins on Ash Wednesday, the seventh Wednesday before Easter.

In many countries, the last day before Lent (called Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday, Carnival, or Fasching) has become a last fling before the solemnity of Lent. For centuries, it was customary to fast by abstaining from meat during Lent, which is why some people call the festival *Carnival*, which is Latin for *farewell to meat*.

The Eastern Church

The Eastern Church does not skip over Sundays when calculating the length of the Great Lent. Therefore, the Great Lent always begins on Clean Monday, the seventh Monday before Easter, and ends on the Friday before Palm Sunday—using of course the eastern date for Easter. The Lenten fast is relaxed on the weekends in honor of the Sabbath (Saturday) and the Resurrection (Sunday). The Great Lent is followed by Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, which are feast days, then the Lenten fast resumes on Monday of Holy Week. Technically, in the Eastern Church, Holy Week is a separate season from the Great Lent.

Special Days

The purpose of the liturgical calendar is to relive the major events in Jesus' life in real time, which is why Lent is forty days long. If Jesus were born on 25 December, then His conception—thus also His incarnation—would have been nine months earlier, on about 25 March. That is when the angel Gabriel would have announced Jesus' birth to Mary. Thus 25 March is known in the historic church as *The Annunciation*.

Roughly speaking, the western Church consists of Protestants, Catholics, and Anglicans.

The eastern Church consists of the Eastern Orthodox churches, the Oriental Orthodox churches, and the eastern-rite churches affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.

Bangalore: Bishops to Hold Dharna on Feb 18

FW: From the Desk of...

Joseph Dias, General Secretary, The CSF

Catholic-Christian Secular Forum www.thecsf.org

^Evangelical ^Ecumenical ^Interdenominational

Christians demand release of Asia Bibi

Asia Bibi

Hundreds of Christians in Punjab have demanded the release of Asia

Bibi, a Pakistani Catholic woman sentenced to death for blasphemy. The Christian Front Punjab held a demonstration on Feb. 19 at Attari on the Indo-Pak border urging the neighboring country to repeal its blasphemy laws which they alleged are being used against religious minorities. Church of North India Bishop P.K. Samantaroy of Amritsar said they have contacted various Christian bodies to build pressure on the Pakistan government to scrap the blasphemy law. "It is unfortunate that Christians are being targeted under the controversial law," he added.

A court in Pakistan on Nov. 7, 2010 sentenced 45-year-old Bibi to death, accepting the prosecution version that she had passed derogatory remarks about Prophet Mohammed. The woman was in jail for the last one year in connection with the crime. She was forced to defend her religion when Muslim women on June 19, 2009 termed her as "infidel" and Christianity a "religion of infidels" and pressed her to embrace Islam. Bibi and her children were allegedly beaten up after the incident.

Protests continue against Somashekhara report

Over 50,000 Christians braved heavy rain to take part in a rally in

Bangalore to protest against an enquiry commission's report on the

2008 church attacks in Karnataka. The protesters demanded the state
government reject the B.K. Somashekhara commission report for not
identifying people who attacked the churches. The rally was organized
by the Karnataka United Christians Forum of Human Rights.

Archbishop Bernard Moras of Bangalore and the forum president called on the Christians to "boldly profess and propagate our faith." He noted that so far there have been 300 attacks on churches in the state since the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian people's party) came to power in 2008. Bishop Vasanth Kumar, moderator of the

Protestant Church of South India, said Indians have the right to practise, preach and propagate their religion.

At a similar protest in Mangalore on February 20, more than 100,000 people held a silent march. Eighteen Protestant and Catholic bishops had on February 18 submitted a memorandum to chief minister B.S. Yeddyurappa and the governor demanding withdrawal of cases lodged against over 150 Christian youths in connection with the attacks. State home minister R. Ashok had in turn announced that the government would take appropriate steps to withdraw as many as 338 cases filed against Christian youth. The ecumenical forum is planning protest rallies in various parts of the state in the coming days against the probe report.

Christian School Burnt in Srinagar, Kashmir

Miscreants on 19 February burned a Christian school, resulting in property damages of about Rs. 60 Lacs in Srinagar, Kashmir. It was reported that at about 10:30 p.m, some miscreants set on fire St. Paul's International School. Eight rooms including the class rooms, library and computer rooms were completely burned down. Speaking to EFI, the principal of the school, Grace Paljor said, that prior to the incident, she was threatened verbally a number of times by some group of people for being a Christian. Investigations are underway.

Calicut bishop appointed pontifical council secretary

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Bishop Joseph Kalathiparambil of Calicut as the secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral

Care of Migrants and Itinerant people. The announcement was made simultaneously at the Vatican and the Calicut Bishop's House on Feb. 22. The Vatican post has been vacant since the resignation of Archbishop Agostino Marchetto in August 2010. The council attends to the pastoral needs of the homeless and those forced to leave their native land.

Bishop Kalathiparambil is the third Indian to appointed secretary to a Pontifical Council, reported "Malayala Manorama" newspaper. He was born on Oct. 6, 1952 in Vaduthala, near Ernakulam in Kerala. He was ordained a priest on March 13, 1978 for Verapoly archdiocese. He has specialized in canon law from Rome and worked as the vice rector of the Collegio San Paolo in Rome during 1984-1989. At the end of that five-year term, he came to India and took over as the chancellor Verapoly archdiocese on Aug. 15, 1989, Indian Independence Day. On Nov. 6, 1996, he was made the archdiocese's vicar general. He was ordained Bishop of Calicut on May 19, 2002.

Congress Government Dithers on Dalit Christian & Muslim Issue
Judiciary Risks Getting Communalised & Politicised?

The CSF is shocked at the reported statement of the Attorney General
G.E. Vahanvati advising India's Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs
that the central government need not act "at this stage" on the 60
year demand by Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims for Scheduled Caste
status currently enjoyed by only Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhists adherents.
It seems that after sections of the polity, media, police,
bureaucracy, etc. it is now the judiciary that is becoming
increasingly communalised & politcised. We have seen this happen in
the judges comment in Graham Staines murder trial and also in Justice
Somasekhara's views in his report on the Karnataka anti Christian
violence. The AG's comments now runs the risk of giving the impression
that parts of the judiciary are being used to serve political ends.
The CSF feels that Congress led UPA government has no excuses to

discriminate between Christian / Muslim dalits and dalits of other faiths, who enjoy SC benefits. Denying them their rights is akin to the government promoting certain faiths (Hinduism, Budhism and Sikhism), while targetting Christian & Muslim dalits.

The Supreme Court is expected to hear a key case on 24 February 2011 when it expects the government to give its opinion on a challenge to Paragraph 3 of Article 341 of India's Constitution (Scheduled Caste Order) 1950. More than dozen individuals and advocates, including Dalit Christians and Muslims, have joined the case. This case has seen numerous hearings and delays ever since early 2004. The Cabinet Committee, headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, includes Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Home Minister P. Chidambaram, and Defence Minister A.K. Antony. Minorities Affairs Minister Salman Khursheed was a special invitee at the meeting. According to news reports, the AG feels the issue is very complicated and has several ramifications.

The Centre for Public Interest Litigation, run by former Law Minister Shanti Bhushan and his son Prashant Bhushan, filed Writ Petition (Civil) No. 180 of 2004 in early 2004 on behalf of plaintiff Franklin Caesar. Para 3 of Article 341 has been described by Christians and Muslims as anti-Constitutional and "communalising" the upliftment of the former untouchable groups who still remain the most economically and politically marginalised in India. The Supreme Court has repeatedly delayed a verdict because of the Union government's inability to make up its mind on the matter despite repeated prodding by the court. "This speaks of a debilitating indecisiveness which is born of political perfidy and bureaucratic obduracy. In short, India's officials need to stand for what is right. All Dalits face similar societal discrimination and deserve similar government benefits," said John Dayal, Secretary General, All India Christian Council (aicc).

Dayal said, "Sections of the officialdom, belonging to the upper

castes, and sections of the same power groups in the ruling and the major opposition party are opposing the assertion of the religious minority groups to regain their constitutional rights. We do not see why these groups feel so threatened. Our brothers and sisters in the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits know that most government jobs and seats in educational institutions go unfilled, and there is enough for everyone to share without restricting each others' privileges and rights." Dr. Joseph D'souza, aicc President, said, "To be clear, we advocate the striking of religion in Article 341 as a qualification for Dalits to receive government assistance. This era of prevarication and political indecisiveness must end. Dalit Christians and Muslims must be given their rights now."

Many experts believe the government has more than enough political support. Following a five decade long agitation, almost every opposition party -- barring of course the BJP -- has extended support to the demand of Dalit Christians. State Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh and other states have passed resolutions to this effect. Chief Ministers including Mr. Nitish Kumar of Bihar, Ms. Mayawati of Uttar Pradesh, and Mr. M.K. Karunanidhi of Tamil Nadu publically have urged the Union Government to restore Dalit Christian's rights. The National Commission for Minorities as well as the 2007 report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities (headed by retired Justice Misra and often called the "Misra Commission") gave unequivocal support. The Justice Sachchar Committee acknowledged the disenfranchising of the Dalit Muslim groups. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes headed by former governor Mr. Buta Singh fully supports these demands, although it proposed a separate quota.

When the Constitution was signed, the affirmative action of reservations in jobs, legislatures, schools, and on such issues as rural development was given to all Dalits. Then communally motivated

lobbyists forced the government to pass the 1950 order restricting privileges to Hindus alone. The government soon bowed to pressure from Dalit Sikhs and Buddhists and restored their rights. Even for the Christians, the Cabinet under Prime Minister Narsimha Rao passed a resolution and moved a Bill in Parliament to restore rights. The Bill wasn't taken up for technical reasons, and Parliament was soon dissolved. Since that day, governments have been prevaricating on the issue with scant respect for legal precedent, legislative propriety and humane considerations.

EU Condemns Anti-Christian Terrorist Acts

The foreign ministers of the Council of the European Union issued a statement condemning terrorist acts against Christians and other religious groups. This statement, publicized Monday at the conclusion of a foreign affairs council meeting in Brussels, affirmed "the strong commitment of the European Union to the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief without any discrimination." The council expressed "its profound concern about the increasing number of acts of religious intolerance and discrimination, as epitomized by recent violence and acts of terrorism, in various countries, against Christians and their places of worship, Muslim pilgrims and other religious communities, which it firmly condemns." It also offered "condolences and solidarity to the countries and individual victims of such acts and pays tribute to the commitment of countries to prevent them."

"Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right which needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone," the statement affirmed. It asserted that "all persons belonging to religious communities and minorities should be able to practice their religion and worship freely, individually or in community with others, without fear of

intolerance and attacks." The council called on the international community "to consolidate its collective response to those who want to use religion as an instrument of division, fuelling extremism and violence." It also urged the high representative, Catherine Ashton, to "report on the measures taken and on concrete proposals to further strengthen the European Union action in this regard."

Positive steps

The statement was welcomed by Vatican Radio, which in its French edition noted that the European Union "has made a gesture in favor of religious liberty." Vatican Radio reported some telephone statements of Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, archbishop of Bordeaux, France, in which he congratulated the European ministers on this decision. Cardinal Ricard expressed his satisfaction on behalf of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE) as well as the Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican representatives of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) who met last week in Belgrade. In this meeting, the religious leaders requested that the foreign ministers keep in mind the situation of persecuted Christians. The cardinal reported, "We were thinking of the Christians in Iraq, Egypt and Pakistan" in particular. "Our position is not partisan," he said. "Not only does it manifest solidarity to Christians but to all believers." The prelate added, "However, at the same time we said to ourselves that if we don't defend those in the world today who are, perhaps, the most attacked, the Christians, then who will defend them?"

Concrete initiatives

"I am very happy that the ministers expressed themselves," he said, "given the reticence of the ministers of five countries." "It would have been catastrophic to remain in a kind of silence, of incapacity to speak," Cardinal Ricard stated. "Now a public statement has been made and I hope that it will now be translated in concrete initiatives on the spot." He continued: "However, I think it is good that the

foreign affairs ministers were able to overcome their reticence and to speak with one voice. I am truly happy about that." The cardinal said, "We hope that the relations of some countries of the European Union with countries where minorities are persecuted will make their voice heard and exert pressure, as the temptation exists that for commercial and economic reasons they remain in a prudent silence." He asserted, "At stake is liberty of conscience and respect of man's dignity."

Nun's husband to be ordained

A Lutheran convert will be ordained as a Catholic priest in Germany and allowed to remain married to his wife who is already a Carmelite nun. The Cologne archdiocese said 61-year-old Harm Klueting is to be ordained as a Catholic priest today, Fox News reports.

Pope Benedict gave him a special permission to remain married to his wife Edeltraut Klueting, who became a Catholic Carmelite nun in 2004. The couple has two grown children. It doesn't happen every day," noted Vatican spokesman Father Federico Lombardi.

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The CSF is India's only ISO 9001:2000 certified NGO for "undertaking community development programmes for human rights, social service, medical aid, education, charity & relief " of the laity, supported by the clergy. The certification is by the joint accredition service of Australia & New Zealand.

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In the Love of the Lord,

Lorna

Bishops of various churches will hold a dharna here tomorrow to express grievances of the Christian community and to voice their demands, including a CBI inquiry into attacks on Christian communities and places of worship in Karnatka.

Talking to reporters here today, Archbishop of Bangalore and president of Karnataka Region Catholic Bishops' Council Bernard Moras said the community has rejected the findings of the Justice B K Somasekhara Commission, that probed attacks on churches in parts of Karnataka in 2008.

"We want the state government with all its force at its command to reject the onesided, totally unjust and biased report and demand that the entire series of attacks must be entrusted to CBI for a comprehensive probe," he said.

It was surprising even after confirming the attacks, the commission failed to identify the culprits, he said.

"We also demand that over 150 cases lodged against Christian youth and women must be unconditionally withdrawn forthwith and adequate and just compensation or restitution must be done to individuals and institutions that were attacked and subjected to great loss," he said.

Their demand also included that the culprits in attacks be identified.

Condemning the report, he said despite the fact that the community had served and contributed significantly to the state

"our voice is not heard", he said.

"We demand that we be allowed our constitutional right of being able to practice our religion," the Bishop said.

They would submit a memorandum to the Governor H R Bhardwaj enlisting their

demands after the dharna, he said.

He said he had earlier met Bhardwaj over the issue and he had expressed "sadness" that culprits had not been identified.

The Bishop said he had personally sought an appointment with the Chief Minister which had not been granted.

However, he said he had written a letter to the Chief Minister expressing the community's feeling on the issue.

Priests, pastors, nuns and community members in Bangalore and surrounding areas would also hold a meeting-cum-protest rally to voice their grievances on February 21.

He said a statue in a shrine was damaged by unidentified persons in Hennur today. "The culprits should be identified", he said. RSS holding "Kumbh" to reconvert tribal Christians; community frightened

Submitted by admin4 on 10 February 2011 - 11:43am

• Indian Muslim

By Pervez Bari, TwoCircles.net,

Bhopal: The spectre of fear and depredation is haunting minorities, especially the Christian community, in tribal-dominated Mandla district of Bharatiya Janata Party, (BJP), ruled Madhya Pradesh as all is geared up for the three-day huge congregation of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, (RSS), "Kumbh" festival wherein over 20 lakh (two million) people are expected to assemble. Although Christians are not opposing the mega event but media reports that the festival aims to "return" tribal Christians to Hinduism have created fear among the community.

The congregation christened as "Maa Narmada Saamaajik Kumbh" (Social Fair of Mother Narmada river) is being organized by the Dharm Jagaran Vibhag (Religious Revival Department) of the RSS from February 10 to 12 ostensibly to hold a social

gathering but the "main aim" is mass reconversion programme called "Ghar Wapsi" (Home Coming) for tribal Christians as the community heads fear. As such the Christian community not just of the Mandla district but of the entire region encompassing Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh, have solid reasons to fear an outbreak of violence against them during or after the event from cadres of the Sangh Parivar.

Among others, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, former chief K. S. Sudarshan and RSS leader Suresh Soni along with Chief Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Narendra Modi and Raman Singh of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh respectively are expected to address the conclave. Besides MP, tribals from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Rajasthan are expected to attend the "Kumbh".

The programme schedule of the three-day "Kumbh" includes Dharam Sabha, Saint convention, Yuva sammelan and Mahila Sammelan. Besides, "Shahi Snan" will also be performed. Twenty "ghats" (platforms) have been constructed on the banks of the river Narmada. Six small townships have been constructed for housing those coming to the Kumbh, namely Shankar Shah Raghunath Mahanagar, Mata Bambleshwari Mahanagar, Shivaji Mahanagar, Maharana Pratap Mahanagar, Mahismriti Mahanagar and Chhatrasal Mahanagar.

The "Mandla Kumbh" is being organized on the lines of the "Shabri Kumbh", held in Dang district of Gujarat in 2006. Swami Aseemanand, who is now in jail on the charge of being behind several terror attacks in the country, was the chief organizer of the Shabri Kumbh. It is alleged that rudimentary plans for the subsequent bomb blasts at Malegaon, Mecca masjid, Ajmer Shareef and Samjhauta Express were drawn up at Shabri Kumbh. Then, besides hate speeches before, during and after the event, the "Shabri Kumbh" also led to the beating of Christians, with many abandoning the area, and much loss of Christian property, including graveyards. Christian graves were dug up then and crosses were desecrated.

It may be pointed out here that a Compact Disc, (CD), produced by the Shabri Kumbh Samaroh Aayojan Samiti (Organizing Committee) entitled "Shri Shabri Kumbh 2006: Spirituality along with the Wave of Patriotism," was banned by the Supreme Court of

India because it incites "Hindus against the Christian community and suggests that Christians be attacked and beheaded."

The organizers of the "Kumbh" admit, though privately, that the main objective behind the grand show is to create an atmosphere in which the Church finds it increasingly difficult to convert tribals into Christianity. They indicate that the Kumbh may also be used to encourage the tribals who have already embraced Christianity to come back to the Hindu fold.

The palpable fear among the Christians is not unfounded as run up to the gigantic event a hate-mongering campaign in the area is going on since last more than a month or so. The campaign is underway with the distribution of objectionable literature targeting Christians and also Muslims mocking their faith and religious leaders. Media reports emanating from the region say that provocative slogans are being raised by the cadres of RSS and its various affiliates while roaming the tribal Christian localities and browbeating them to fill up forms for the "Ghar Wapsi" function to be held during the congregation.

Reports emanating from Mandla say that every day, small rallies, called "Kalash Yatras" are being taken out in which anti-Christian slogans are raised. The slogans warn the Christians of "counter-action, if they do not stop their nefarious activities". Local Christian leaders fear that they may be physically assaulted and have sought police protection.

The statements and sayings yesteryears Indian leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar have been invoked by the RSS to convey its warning message to the Church. Huge bill boards and hoardings carrying the quotations of Gandhi, Vivekananda and Ambedkar, have come up around the "Kumbh" venue. A hoarding, ostensibly quoting what the Mahatma Gandhi said in 1935, reads "If I get the power to enact a law, the first law I will enact will put a blanket ban on Conversions". Similar quotations from Vivekananda and Ambedkar welcome the guests at the main entrance of the Kumbh venue. Visitors are being reminded that Rani Durgawati had also resisted attempt to convert her.

The religious leaders of the scared Christian community are moving from pillar to post to make the administration and the law enforcing agencies from top to bottom understand their plight and worst fears and take precautionary measures before it is too late. The pleadings of the Christians have had little effect as not much concern was shown to the seriousness of the matter by those holding the reins of power.

The Christians while keeping pressure on the state government officials later on knocked the doors of the state High Court through a petition demanding directions to the BJP Government to provide enough security to them to save their life and property which is at stake in view of the vitiated atmosphere created by the saffron forces. The High Court is reported to have ordered the State Government to heed to the Christians deep concern and take necessary precautionary steps to stall any untoward incident that may take place during the "Kumbh" festival or afterwards which may endanger the life and property of the minorities.

Fr. Anand Muttangal, spokesperson for the Catholic Church of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh talking to newspersons claimed that unless preventive measures were taken "a Kandhamal-like situation may develop in Mandla". Fr. Anand said: "Christians in the State are upset over the virulent campaign against their community and their faith by the organizers of the Kumbh." Pamphlets being distributed in Mandla, among other things, describe missionaries as "Wolf in a lamb's clothing". Another pamphlet purports to expose the "real face of Mother Teresa". Yet another pamphlet claims that Portuguese explorer Vasco De Gama, who landed in Calicut in 1498 "persecuted Hindus and killed a Brahmin". In contrast, the pamphlet claims, when Syrian Christians came to India in 321 AD, they were allowed to live here by the Hindu rulers and were even permitted to construct their places of worship".

Fr. Anand on behalf of Madhya Pradesh Isai Mahasangh submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Chouhan asking him to explain the true purpose of the event and cited a state law, the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, which requires anybody converting to another faith to give prior notice. He said he had information that many tribals who had earlier become Christians would be forced to sign forms to "reconvert."

The leaders of the Christian community have met the Madhya Pradesh Governor Rameshwar Thakur, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Director General of Police S. K. Raut to apprise them of the objectionable and inflammatory publicity

material being used by the organizers of the "Kumbh". They were also handed over copies of the pamphlets etc. being distributed.

Meanwhile, a two-member fact-finding team of the All India Christian Council, (AICC), recently spent three days in the Mandla-Jabalpur region and painstakingly concluded that there are imminent threats to the Christian community. The fact-finding team was comprised of Dr. John Dayal, member, National Integration Council, Government of India, and AICC secretary general, and Vijayesh Lal, human rights activist and secretary of the Religious Liberty Commission, Evangelical Fellowship of India.

The team uncovered plans for 'ghar wapsi' (homecoming celebration) or conversion to Hinduism of local Christians despite Madhya Pradesh's Freedom of Religion Act which requires prior notice of such actions. Literature distributed near the site talks about purging the region of 'Christian missionaries' who are falsely accused of large-scale conversions of tribals, mostly Gonds. The fact-finding report was submitted this week to the Madhya Pradesh Governor, the Union Minority Affairs minister, the Union Home minister, and the National Commission for Minorities.

Dr. John Dayal, AICC secretary general, said: "We support the freedom of the majority community to hold massive religious events. But, we fear that, even if there is no violence or a forcible conversion of Christians to Hinduism during the "Kumbh", the Hindutva campaign has poisoned the atmosphere in Madhya Pradesh. This will negatively impact relationships between Christian and other tribals in the hamlets, villages, and townships of the region."

"The penetration of hard core Hindutva activists in Madhya Pradesh may have a longterm dampening effect on freedom of religion in this region. It may also negatively impact the continuing social work of Christians, including schools and medical centers in under-developed districts," said Dayal.

"We were told that sadhus and Hindutva activists have traveled throughout the Mandla's villages. While collecting money for food and care of Kumbh participants, they made oral threats and allegations of illegal activities by missionaries or priests, according to Christian and social leaders in Mandla. They threatened to wipe out Christianity from the region and convert the region's Christians to Hinduism through ritual cleansing," said Dr. Dayal.

The police superintendent issued orders on December 6, 2010 telling churches, and other groups, they must close schools and institutions and house visiting dignitaries and women police. School officials told police a lengthy school closure will be impossible. The police superintendent now claims he did not sign the order, but the fact-finding team has procured what appears to be an authentic copy.

Meanwhile, the main opposition Congress party is maintaining an absolute silence on this issue. It is only criticizing the alleged corruption and irregularities in the preparations being made for the Kumbh. It says that public funds should not be spent on a religious-cum-political function. However, the party is making no comments on the real intentions of the organizers of the show. But, a block level Congress leader of Bhopal Naveen Chaube submitted a memorandum to the state Governor bringing to his notice a magazine titled "Pathey" brought out by the organizers of the "Kumbh" namely "Maa Narmada Saamaajik Kumbh Samaroh Samiti" of Madhyabharat-Malwa Prant spewing venom and trying to vitiate the communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims in the state. The booklet contains cartoons depicting Indian Prime Minister with closed eyes holding a hand of a terrorist with a dagger, calling a Hindu Sadhu (saint) a terrorist, "Love Jehad", increase in Muslim population with slogan of "Hum Panch Hamare Pachchis" etc. Chaube demanded that the registration of the magazine be cancelled forthwith and action taken against its publisher and printer under the National Security Act, (NSA), while registering cases against all the office-bearers of the committee.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary and former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh has alleged that the RSS) and the BJP were ruining established Sanatan Dharam (Hindu religion) traditions.

Singh in a statement said that in India four kumbhs have been held since the Sanatan period and all followers of the religion have faithfully associated with Haridwar, Prayag, Ujjain and Nasik. However, the BJP Governments of various States in association with the RSS are organizing "kumbhs" festivals at places other than the traditional venues.

The Chhattisgarh Government, led by Raman Singh, is busy in organizing Rajim "Kumbh" and now the Madhya Pradesh Government is going to organise a three-day Kumbh in Mandla from February 10, thus equating them with the mythological

"Kumbh", he pointed out. He claimed that such changes are not only ruining Sanatani traditions, but also amount to cheating people by playing with their sentiments.

The Congress leader said that he welcomes Jagadguru Shankaracharya's statement, alleging the BJP Government in Madhya Pradesh of ruining the established Sanatani traditions. He requested the BJP and the RSS to refrain from terming these events as the "Kumbh", as it amounts to playing with the sentiments of people and also misguides them.

It may be pointed out here that originally the "Kumbh" was a gathering of holy men to discuss Hinduism. Since then Hindu nationalist led by the RSS have steered the traditional definition toward their own ends.

Meanwhile, according to Home Department the State government has allotted a whopping Rs.250 crore to the Mandla district administration for developing new roads, repairing existing ones, and ensuring uninterrupted drinking water, electricity and health services during the "Kumbh" in this backward tribal-dominated region.

Pope: Community Life Is Expression of the Church

Greets Fraternity of St. Charles on 25th Anniversary of Founding

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 13, 2011 (Zenit.org).- While community life might help to attract vocations to the priesthood, or help priests avoid a life a solitude, it's true value is that it's a "path for immersing oneself in the reality of communion," says Benedict XVI.

The Pope said this today upon greeting the priests and seminarians of the Fraternity of St. Charles on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the community.

During his address, the Holy Father addressed the "place of the ordained priesthood in the life of the Church," and the "place of communal life in the priestly experience."

"The Christian priesthood is not an end in itself," the Pontiff stated. "It was willed by Christ in function of the birth and the life of the Church."

Benedict XVI explained that the "glory and joy of the priesthood is to serve Christ and his Mystical Body. It represents a very beautiful and singular vocation in the Church, which makes Christ present because it participates in the one and eternal priesthood of Christ."

Regarding communal life for priests, the Pope noted that he has spoken on many occasions about the importance for priests to live in community: "It is important for priests not to live off on their own somewhere, but to accompany one another in small communities, to support one another, and so to experience, and constantly realize afresh, their communion in service to Christ and in renunciation for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven."

The Holy Father recalled that communal life is not first and foremost a "strategy" to help attract vocations, nor is it "only a form of help in the face of the solitude and weakness of man."

"All of this may certainly be true," he continued, "but only if it is conceived and lived as a path for immersing oneself in the reality of communion. Communal life is in fact an expression of the gift of Christ that is the Church, and it is prefigured in the apostolic community from which the priesthood arose."

"Communal life thus expresses a help that Christ provides for our life, calling us, through the presence of brothers, to an ever more profound conformity to his person," the Holy Father added. "Living with others means accepting the need of my own continual conversion and above all discovering the beauty of such a journey, the joy of humility, of penance, but also of conversation, of mutual forgiveness, of mutual support."

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SINGAPORE : Archbishop Nicholas Chia's Message to Catholic Schools - Sexuality

Education in Our Catholic Schools and what the Church teaches about Pre-Marital Sex

and Contraception –

Dear Principals, Vice-Principals and Heads of Department in our Catholic Schools, Greetings for the New Year! My prayers and blessings on all of you as you begin a new academic year.

On the occasion of the World Day for Peace on January 1st our Pope Benedict has dedicated his message to peace which he connects closely to religious freedom. He says "The right to religious freedom is rooted in the very dignity of the human person, whose transcendent nature must not be ignored or overlooked. God created man and woman in his own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:27).

For this reason each person is endowed with the sacred right to a full life, also from a spiritual standpoint. Without the acknowledgement of his spiritual being, without openness to the transcendent, the human person withdraws within himself, fails to find answers to the heart's deepest questions about life's meaning, fails to appropriate lasting ethical values and principles, and fails even to experience authentic freedom and to build a just society."

Many of you have requested that the Catholic Church teachings be clarified in the area of Pre-Marital Sex and Contraception in the context of the sexuality programmes that are taught in our schools.

Firstly, we acknowledge that we live in a secular society where no specific religious group has the right to impose its beliefs on others. Within the context of our Catholic Schools however I would find it unacceptable if students were given a compromised message on pre-marital sex. This applies to all students in the school.

Secondly, we are very concerned with the increasing incidence of sexually transmitted infections among students caused by young people indulging in sexual activity with multiple partners.

We are convinced that the solution to our problems is not to compromise but to remain faithful to what has been proven beneficial to the human person and supports the dignity and sacredness of human love and life.

The Church's official teaching - The official teaching of the church regarding sexual intercourse (the marital act) and contraception has been consistently taught both in the tradition and in the official Magisterium of the church.

Pius XI in 1930 wrote in the encyclical Casti Connubi: "any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin." (CC 56).

After much debate, in 1968 in the after-math of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI published the encyclical Humanae Vitae reiterating the previous position of the church: "The Church... teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life." (HV 11) In another place it reads "every action which... proposes whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible is intrinsically evil" (HV14).

This teaching has been reaffirmed by John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation of 1981, Familiaris Consortio and offered to the faithful in the teachings of the 'Catechism of the Catholic church' as follows: "the two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family." (CCC 2362).

Two things we should stress from these texts: First, there is no mention of any particular means of contraception, since what is at stake is not the method used or whether this method is natural or artificial. What is at stake is the moral act of contraception. Thus, whether the choice to contracept is done through the use of condoms, oral hormones, behavior (such as the "so called" withdrawal method) or simply a general attitude or mentality against the conception of a child, what spouses choose to do is to render their marital life sterile.

A second point we need to stress is this teaching concerns marital acts, since marital acts are the only ethical sexual acts in the eyes of the church. The teaching of the church is concerned with the faithful preservation of the teachings of Jesus Christ and its application in different times and places to assist Christians to lead lives consistent with their status as children of God.

If we present to our young people how to use the condom outside marriage, just in case you need it, it would be as though the church is teaching us how to sin less grievously

which makes no sense. Thus, we do not find official teachings of the church on the uses of contraceptives in extramarital or homosexual sex.

The use of condoms - First of all, we must note that condoms, even if invented or commonly used to prevent the transmission of life, are now also used to prevent the transmission of death. Condoms in that sense would not be primarily an instrument of contraception but an instrument of prevention of the spread of a disease. In fact, condoms, when used in homosexual acts, cannot be contraceptive at all, since the homosexual act is never a conceptive act in the first place.

So, even when extra-marital sex is intrinsically wrong, wouldn't it be better that these wrong acts, would be rendered "less irresponsible and dangerous" by protecting the participants of the sexual act with a condom?

Bishop Anthony Fisher, Australian Bishop and a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, thinks so: "Whether and when condoms are effective for preventing disease transmission is complex (...). But prima facie, while extra-marital intercourse is always wrong because it is unchaste, the intention of reducing the danger to health by wearing a condom is a good one and the actual act is indifferent."

However, his argument does not conclude there. He continues: "On the other hand, insofar as using a condom lends a true - or, more likely, false - sense of security to sexual activity it may make the user more likely to engage in wrongful intercourse and so condomizing intercourse can aggravate the wrong. As such, the activity becomes habitual it further clouds people's understanding of sexuality, and accustoms them to ways of thinking and relating that will make it more difficult for them ever to enter profoundly into marital communion. Condoms may be 'safer' but they certainly do nothing for people's chastity!" [Anthony Fisher, Cooperation, Condoms and HIV (Henkels Lecture for Bioethics Symposium on Moral Conviction vs Political Pressure, Institute of Bioethics at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio USA)]

Some theologians argue that if contraception is wrong in itself, couples who engage in the sexual act outside marriage, when they use contraceptives are in fact adding a new wrong to their already wrong act of extra-marital sex.

Another debated issue is whether married couples could use condoms if one partner is infected with the HIV virus. Cardinals and other ecclesiastical authorities have defended condom use by married couples to prevent transmission of HIV. Examples of these are Carlo Cardinal Martini,

Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, former president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, Cardinal Danneels of Belgium and George Cottier, O.P., former theologian to John Paul II.

The opposite opinion is also held that such acts would not be true marital acts, since they would prevent the act from being fully a sexual marital act because it precisely prevents its consummation. Recently, in the book-interview "Light of the World", the Pope made some comments regarding the seemingly responsible use of condoms by male prostitutes. The Press understood this as an exception to the normal policy of the church against condoms and a possible change of vision in the church's doctrine on contraception. The Press has spread this message far and wide, without much clarity. Conclusion - I am deeply grateful to all of you for your care of the young and their moral and spiritual development as well as their intellectual and physical growth. My prayers accompany all your efforts. Let us have the courage of our convictions and bring true education and values into sexuality and all other subjects and aspects of school life. Your brother and friend, + Archbishop Nicholas Chia, 10th January 2011 (ACCS, the Archdiocesan Commission for Catholic Schools in Singapore) - http://www.accs.sg

Suicide a Prevalent Evil

Isn't the above testimony amazing....? A man being saved seven times of trying to kill himself

But the truth is the Suicidal deaths caused through depression is on a sky rocketing all around....the world.

And most of the casualties don't know the true hope.... I meant the Lord....

A day back my friend's sister in law killed herself leaving her only 2 year old son and husband orphaned.....

When I heard the shocking news... I was deeply hurt and was filled with grief for the hopeless world....

The truth is where there is no Christ there is no hope...

The Analysts say that by the Year 2015 the world's second largest disease will be Suicide.. Replacing Cancer....

To kill oneself due to depression is a hurting and painful and sometimes a shameful death....

God never accepts Suicide.. Even if a person knows Christ and kills himself believing he will makeup to Heaven...

He never accepts it... The best example is Judas Iscariot.....

The only way a person can overcome such strong poisoning depressions that drives a person to kill himself through fear and anxiety...

is through the Grace and Love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

What if the person doesn't know the Lord?

That's why you and me are placed in our work spots to bring hope to the lost ones seated beside you.....

Lift up your eyes from your cubicle and have a picture of your bay...

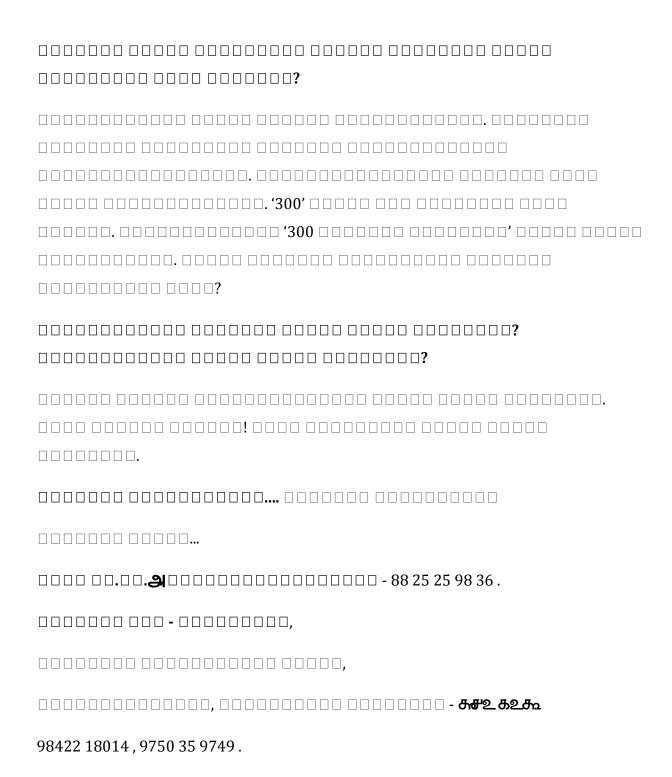
All the souls look merry on the outside but the inside they are broken with issues and problems in life...

Pray and ask God to use you as a vessel to fill those broken hearts
When you diligently ask God He will provide the way out
We can change the Predictions Yes 2015 will be a year where many Souls will witness for Christ As the Mexican Rock star Carlos (Above)
Praise the LORD
In the Love of the Lord,
Lorna
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-- திருத்தந்தை : மனிதன் தன்னலச் சோதனையை வெல்வதற்கு நோன்பு அனுபவம் உதவுகின்றது பிப்.22,2011. மனிதன் அன்பின் கூறுகளில் வளருவதற்குத் தடையாய் இருக்கும் தன்னலத்தை வெற்றி கொள்வதற்கு நோன்பு அனுபவம் வழியாக அவன் கற்றுக் கொள்ள முடியும் என்று திருத்தந்தை 16ம் பெனடிக்ட் கூறினார்.

வருகிற மார்ச் 9ம் தேதி சாம்பல் புதனோடு தொடங்கும் இந்த 2011ம் ஆண்டின் தபக்காலத்திற்கெனத் திருத்தந்தை வெளியிட்டுள்ள செய்தியில் இவ்வாறு குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார்.

பல்வேறு நோக்கங்களைக் கொண்டிருக்கும் நோன்பானது, கிறிஸ்தவர்களுக்கு ஓர் ஆழமான மத முக்கியத்துவத்தைக் கொடுக்கின்றது என்றுரைக்கும் திருத்தந்தை, நமது உணவு மேஜையில் வறியவர்களுக்கு இடம் கொடுப்பதன் மூலம் தன்னலத்தை மேற்கொள்ளக் கற்றுக் கொள்கிறோம் என்றார். அத்துடன், சுயநலத்தைப் புறந்தள்ளி, நமக்கு நெருக்கமாக இருக்கும் கடவுளைக் கண்டு கொள்ளவும், பல சகோதர சகோதரிகளின் முகத்தில் கடவுளைக் காணவும் நோன்பு உதவுகின்றது என்றும் அவர் கூறியுள்ளார்.

மனமாற்றத்திற்கான நமது அர்ப்பணத்தின் வெளிப்பாடுகளாக பாரம்பரியமாக நாம் கடைபிடிக்கும் நோன்பு, ஈகை, செபம் ஆகியவற்றின் வழியாக கிறிஸ்துவின் அன்பை இன்னும் அதித்தீவிரமாக வாழ்வதற்கு இத்தபக்காலம் போதிக்கின்றது என்றும் திருத்தந்தையின் செய்தி கூறுகிறது.

நமது வாழ்வை நேர்மையுடன் ஆழமாகப் பரிசீலனை செய்து நமது பலவீனங்களை ஏற்று ஒப்புரவு அருட்சாதனத் திருவருளைப் பெற்று கிறிஸ்துவை நோக்கி ஒரு தீர்மானமானப் பயணத்தைத் தொடருவதற்கு இத்தபக்காலம் சாதகமான காலம் என்றும் அச்செய்தி தெரிவிக்கிறது.

கடவுளுக்கு முதன்மைத்துவம் கொடுப்பதற்குத் தடையாய் இருக்கும் பண ஆசையால் இந்த நம் பயணத்தில் அடிக்கடி நாம் சோதிக்கப்படுகிறோம், இந்தப் பேராசை வன்முறைக்கும் சுரண்டலுக்கும் மரணத்திற்கும் இட்டுச் செல்லும், இதனாலே திருச்சபை இத்தபக்காலத்தில் தானதர்மத்தை ஊக்குவிக்கின்றது என்றார் அவர்.

பொருட்களை வணங்குதல், நம்மைப் பிறரிடமிருந்து பிரிப்பது மட்டுமல்லாமல், மனிதனைக் கடவுளிடமிருந்து திசை திருப்பி அவனை ஏமாற்றி மகிழ்ச்சியின்றி வைக்கின்றது என்று சொல்லி தானதர்மத்தின் சிறப்பை விளக்கியுள்ளார் திருத்தந்தை.

இத்தபக்காலத்தில் தினமும் இறைவார்த்தையைத் தியானித்து
அதனை உள்வாங்குவதன் மூலம் செபம் எவ்வளவு நேர்த்தியானது
என்றும் அதற்கு இணையாக வேறு எதுவும் இல்லை என்றும் கற்றுக்
கொள்கிறோம் என்றும் அவர் கூறினார்.

சாத்தான் பணியில் இருக்கிறான், அவன் ஒருபொழுதும் சோர்வடைவதில்லை, இக்காலத்திலும் இறைவனுக்கு நெருக்கமாகச் செல்ல விரும்பும் மக்களை அவன் சோதித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறான் என்ற திருத்தந்தை, இவ்வுலகில் ஆட்சி செய்யும் சக்திகளாகிய இருளின் தலைவர்களுக்கு எதிராகச் செயல்பட கிறிஸ்தவ விசுவாசம் துணைசெய்கின்றது என்றார். நம் மீட்பரோடு ஆள் ஆள் உறவு கொள்வதன் மூலம், நோன்பு, தானதா்மம், செபம் ஆகியவை மூலம், கிறிஸ்துவின் உயிா்ப்பை நோக்கிய நமது மனமாற்றப் பயணம் நமது திருமுழுக்கு திருவருட்சாதனத்தை மீண்டும் கண்டுணரச் செய்கின்றது என்றும் திருத்தந்தை அதில் கூறியுள்ளாா்.

"நீங்கள் திருமுழுக்குப் பெற்றபோது அவரோடு அடக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டீர்கள். சாவிலிருந்து அவரை உயிர்த்தெழச் செய்த கடவுளின் ஆற்றல்மீது கொண்டுள்ள நம்பிக்கையால் அவரோடு நீங்களும் உயிர்பெற்று எழுந்துள்ளீர்கள்" (கொலோ. 2:12) என்பது திருத்தந்தையின் இவ்வாண்டு தவக்காலச் செய்தியின் கருப்பொருளாகும்.

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