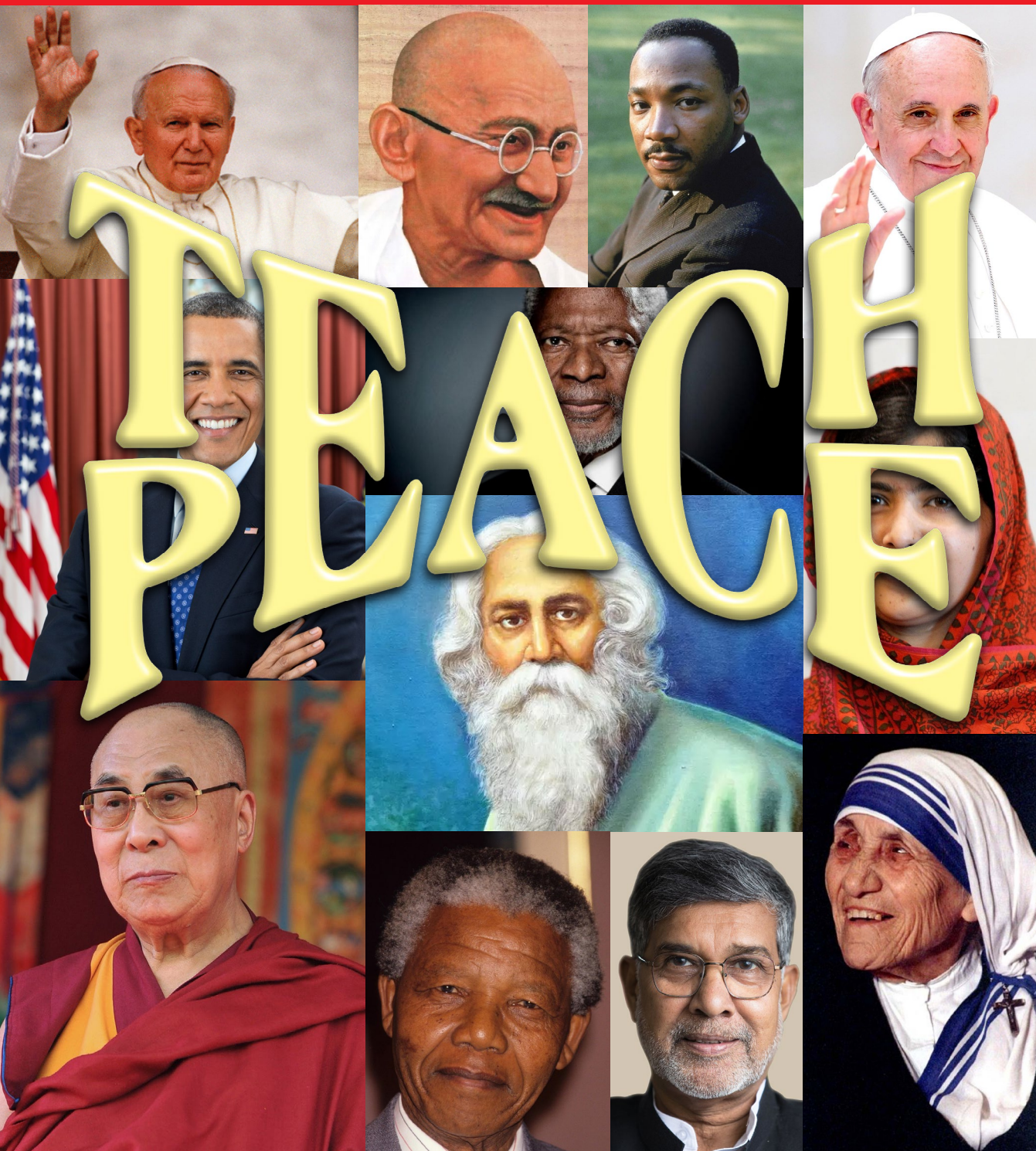


EduFOCUS



Issue 5 July 2019 | Private Circulation Only



**ANDREAN NETWORK OF DYNAMIC
AND INSPIRED EDUCATORS (ANDIE),
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
GRAND ACADEMIC PORTAL (GAP),**

invites all Educators to a National Symposium on

“INCLUSIVITY IN EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

- SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2019”

Panelists include

Shri Ashish Shelar (Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Maharashtra)

Dr. (Fr.) Frazer Mascarenhas SJ (ex-Principal, St. Xavier's College)

Dr. Gurudutta Japee (Founder Member, Grand Academic Portal)

Dr. Prof. Tushar Haathi (ex-Vice Chancellor, Kutch University)

Dr. Renji George (Deputy Director – Higher Education, Government of Goa)

Dr. Rajpal Hande (Principal, Mithibai College)

Adv. Rubina Akhtar Hasan Rizvi (Director, Rizvi Education Trust, Mumbai)

Mrs. Grace Pinto (Managing Director - Ryan International Group of Institutions)

ON SATURDAY, 27TH JULY, 2019

FROM 10 AM TO 1 PM

AT ST. ANDREW'S CONFERENCE HALL,

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For further details and registration, kindly contact
Ms. Sarita Manchanda – 89288 47859 (9 am to 1 pm)
or send an email to andreannetwork@gmail.com

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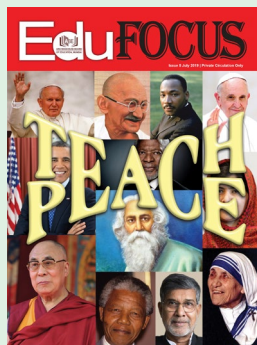
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Fr. Francis Swamy – Joint Secretary
Fr. Simon Lopes – Joint Secretary

A new ABE Executive Committee is being elected as we go to press. The details of the same will be printed in the next issue of EduFOCUS.



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Change of guard



Fr. Dennis Gonsalves

Fr. Dennis Gonsalves takes over as Secretary, Archdiocesan Board of Education with effect from 1st June, 2019. He has also been appointed Parish Priest of Our Lady of Glory Church, Byculla.

Fr. Dennis has been Principal of various ABE schools in the past. In his previous posting, he was Parish Priest of St. Sebastian Church, Marouli. He is a member of the outgoing ABE Executive Committee.

We would also like to thank Fr. George Athaide, outgoing Secretary of the Archdiocesan Board of Education, for all the hard work put in over the last 6 years. He is now Parish Priest at St. Pius X Church, Mulund.



Fr. George Athaide

We wish both, Fr. Dennis and Fr. George, all the very best in their new roles.

- Editor

ABE Reporter Details

For those schools who have not yet done so, we request you to nominate 1 teacher to be our “ABE Reporter”. Kindly send in the name, phone number and email address to manchanda.sarita@gmail.com.

- Editor

We look forward to hearing from you. Do send in your feedback to the Editor at rector@standrewscollege.ac.in

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the articles are solely those of the authors and, not necessarily, those of the Archdiocesan Board of Education, Mumbai.



Fr. Magi Murzello

Editorial

Blessed are the peacemakers... St. John Paul II, in his message on World Day of Peace on 1st January, 1979, focused on the theme, *“To reach peace, teach peace”*. Classrooms would no longer be considered laboratories for subtle brainwashing but would now be active proponents of peace. Incidentally, the United Nations had declared 1979 as the International Year of the Child. Thus, education for peace became the driving force in every classroom because children were seen as builders of peace.

Blessed are the peacemakers... UNESCO’s mission pivots on building peace through education. It aids and supports the governments in its member states to re-orient their national education policies towards values that lay the foundation for peace and respect for human rights and property. In 1981, the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education was established to recognise and reward individuals or organisations that promoted a culture of peace through education. In India, in 2006, together with NCERT, UNESCO pilot tested an Education for Peace manual.

Blessed are the peacemakers... Pope Francis, in the recent historic document, “Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective”, outlines the important role of education in cultivating a culture of peace. The document has been reproduced in this issue along with scholarly inputs from Msgr. Indunil K. Kodithuwakku, Dr. (Fr.) Sebastian M. Michael SVD and Dr. (Fr.) Peter Gonsalves SDB.

Blessed are the peacemakers... Oswald Cardinal Gracias, President of CBCI, and Maulana Mahmood A. Madani, General Secretary of Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, jointly condemned the Easter Sunday suicide bombings in Sri Lanka. Both religious leaders met again at the Eid Milan function to promote human fraternity. In a heart-warming speech, His Eminence exhorted all religious leaders to strengthen and build a brighter India where there is harmony, PEACE and progress.

Blessed are the peacemakers... Jean Vanier strongly believed that the fundamental principle of peace is a belief that each person is important. When I visited France 2 years ago as part of a student exchange programme, I was greatly impressed by “L’Arche”, a community started by Jean Vanier for adults with intellectual disabilities. On my return, I started a culinary course for adults with intellectual disabilities. This May, while in France, I had the sweet sorrow of being present at the funeral Mass of this man that I so deeply admired. May Jean Vanier, the peacemaker, rest in PEACE.

Blessed are the policymakers... if their intention is not to “institutionally cripple” us. I am reminded of a corrupt official who would rudely tell me to stop our “social work” and close down our institutions. He once brought along a panel of educators to downplay our “miniscule” community’s humongous contribution to education. I simply asked the panelists where they had completed their education. All, at some point, had passed through the portals of our educational institutions. They apologized and left the fuming official behind. The same official had printed invitation cards for his daughter’s wedding. A strong believer in sharing “our” resources, he decided to host the reception in our hall without the permission of the trustees. He also expected us to bear the expenses. One is reminded of Aesop’s fable of the fox who lost his tail. The moral of the story is to never trust someone who seeks to lower you to his level.

Blessed are we peacemakers, for God is our strength.



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
PRO
DIALOGO INTER RELIGIONES

MESSAGE

Dear Rev. Fr Magi Murzello,

I am grateful to you for the invitation extended to me to write a message for the July issue of your magazine, EduFOCUS, which will feature the document, Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective, jointly prepared by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the World Council of Churches.

One of my favourite quotes from Pope Francis is “the Church as a field hospital”. He notes, “What the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle.” We live in a fractured world with wounds caused by ethnic, tribal, caste, religious and other types of violence and conflicts. Since children bear the brunt of these conflicts, it is a matter of great urgency to heal their wounds in order to assure ourselves of a peaceful future.

We regard the school as the institution that forms the citizens of tomorrow. Inclusive education shapes an inclusive society. Yet, history attests to the fact that education can also foster exclusion and conflict. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that most of today’s problems are the result, at least in part, of the failure of the educational system to foster a culture of peace and dialogue. Pope Francis notes, “Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature.” (Laudato Si on Care for Our Common Home, 2015, n.215) Thus, there is an urgent need to humanize education. According to the Congregation for Catholic Education, “Humanizing education means putting the person at the centre of education, in a framework of relationships that make up a living community, which is interdependent and bound to

a common destiny. This is fraternal humanism.” (Educating to Fraternal Humanism – Building a “civilization of love”, n. 8.)

In this regard, it is also worth recalling some of the views expressed by Pope Francis in his speech at the Global Conference of Human Fraternity. He said: Education — in Latin, it means “extracting, drawing out” — is to bring to light the precious resources of the soul. [...] Education also happens in a relationship, in reciprocity. Alongside the famous ancient maxim “know yourself”, we must uphold “know your brother or sister”: their history, their culture and their faith, because there is no genuine self-knowledge without the other. As human beings, and even more so as brothers and sisters, let us remind each other that nothing of what is human can remain foreign to us. It is important for the future to form open identities capable of overcoming the temptation to turn in on oneself and become rigid.” (Address of Pope Francis at the Global Conference of Human Fraternity, Founder’s Memorial, Abu Dhabi, 4.2.2019).

The document, Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective, is grounded in our shared conviction that education can play a vital role in resolving conflicts, preventing their recurrence, healing the wounded, building bridges, restoring justice and upholding the equal dignity of all. Accordingly, the document begins with the invitation of Jesus to his disciples: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9) It further notes that “This call to be peacemakers, offered to all disciples of Jesus Christ, is a privilege, a vocation and a challenge.” Even though it is an ecumenical document and is mainly directed to Christians, it affirms that peacebuilding needs to embrace all. In the preamble we read,

The purpose of this document is to encourage churches and Christian organizations to reflect on the structural roots of what has led to the disruption of peace in the world. At the same time, it is hoped that the document may assist a wider conversation on education for peace involving followers of other religions, as well as social and political actors in our multi-religious world, taking into consideration specific historical and cultural contexts.

This important document has three main sections: i) On the basis of Christian scripture, the first section offers 7 reasons why Christians are called to engage in education for peace. ii) The second part of the document presents 12 areas and strategies for implementing peacebuilding through education. Even though all of them have implications for all ages and all sectors of society, some of them are more specifically appropriate for children, others for young people, and still others for adults. iii) The third part of the document offers 10 recommendations to churches, Christian educational institutions, and the national and regional confessional ecumenical bodies for prayerful reflection.

Apart from academic excellence, one of the main goals of the Christian schools is to help students deepen their faith and become more aware of their own identity as well as to prepare them to live in a multi-religious and multi-cultural world. It is crystal clear that an education that is relevant to our time cannot simply aim for transmission of knowledge but must support transformation where students are better able to perceive the interconnectedness of all life – human, plant, and animal. In this regard, the document offers a holistic approach to inclusive education.

“[...] education for children must include exploration of natural and social sciences, humanities as well as practical engagement with modern technology.” (Practical Steps n. 1)

“Education needs to assist in the development of the whole personality and thus needs to include physical, intellectual, moral, social and spiritual dimensions.” (Practical Steps n. 2)

“Education for peace should include the use of folk wisdom, parables, riddles and stories which encourage such processes. Non-book methods and sources of education, such as art, music,

sports, can also enrich and enhance humanity.” (Practical Steps n. 4)

Social polarization often creeps into the education system. “Bias against minorities may affect not only the curriculum for religious education but also the curricula for other subjects, such as history and literature. It can foster a perception that members of the “other” community are not fully or equally citizens of a nation. [...]” (Practical Steps n. 7) Related to the same issue is the right use of social media and other means of communication as instruments of education for peace by countering the spread of “fake news”, biased and baseless information, as well as xenophobic narratives. (cf. Practical Steps n. 8)

The document also deals with the healing power of scripture and worship as effective means of preventing violence and fostering reconciliation. (cf. Practical Steps nos. 9-10) It also warns that scriptures “can be, and have often been, interpreted as tolerating or encouraging discrimination and violence”. (Practical Steps no. 9) Moreover, the document underlines that education for peace transcends the anthropocentrism and embraces entire creation. (cf. Practical Steps n. 12)

We all are in full accord with the vision of Pope Francis: “Only by changing education can we change the world.” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to members of the “Gravissimum Educationis” Foundation, 25.6.2018) To fulfil the mission of peacemaking, therefore, we must put into practice the recommendations of the document, Education for Peace, ecumenically and, where possible, inter-religiously. It requires studying the document, developing educational resources and curricula, identifying potential partners, examining and challenging the past and present structural elements that incite violence, integrating elements of education for peace in spiritual and human formation, narrating and reviving the life stories of extraordinary persons who have laboured tediously for peace and harmony, and praying for the cause of peace.

I thank you, once again, for your efforts to

disseminate the document, Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective. I encourage you and your colleagues to continue in this worthy and much needed mission of peace-making through education.

May God bless all your endeavours!

Yours sincerely,



Msgr. Indunil K. Kodithuwakku
Vatican City, 26th June, 2019



Msgr. Indunil K. Kodithuwakku, of Sri Lankan origin, is currently Secretary in the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue at the Vatican. He was appointed Secretary earlier this month, having served as Under-secretary from 2012. EduFOCUS wishes Msgr. Indunil all the very best in his new appointment.

Congratulations

From the Vatican, 5th July 2019

I am grateful for your message of congratulation addressed to me on the occasion of my appointment as Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

Please remember me in your prayers.



Msgr. Indunil Janakaratne Kodithuwakku Kankanamalage
Secretary

Thank You

We would like to thank **Ms. Nirmala Carvalho** for all her assistance in putting together this cover feature. Right from contacting and informing Msgr. Indunil Kodithuwakku about EduFOCUS' endeavour to spread the message of "teach peace" to Dr. (Fr.) Sebastian M. Michael SVD for his article to Oswald Cardinal Gracias' office for his Eid Milan message, we are indeed grateful for all that she has done so speedily and flawlessly.



Nirmala has been a Crux correspondent since 2004 and, in 2006, won the Communications Award from the Catholic Bishops Conference of India for "exceptional sensitivity to the Church and minority-related issues". She holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and a master's degree in Sociology, both from the University of Mumbai.

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

— Fr. Dennis Gonsalves

What is the aim or purpose of education? We are familiar with the terms like all-round development, quality education, education for general excellence. We may have different visions or mission statements and express our short-term and long-term goals.

What do we want to achieve in our schools? Looking at education from the personality development or character formation perspective, we talk about value education. We may have education for equality, justice, love etc. In this issue, we talk about education for peace in multi-religious world. We see misbehaviour, violence at home, in school, in society and among the nations.

There is loss of human life, homes and infrastructure due to various destructive activities. It is the government and other big organisations which will deal with activities of terrorism but, on our part, we have to educate our children to be lovers and makers of peace in their homes, neighbourhoods and schools.

Jesus is our Prince of Peace. He has told us, **“Blessed are the peace makers, for they will be called children of God.”** Hence, education for peace is important from early childhood because this will teach us to keep and restore right relationship with others, with ourselves and with God.

The document recently published by the World Council of Churches on education for peace gives some practical steps towards peacebuilding through education. E.g. right to appropriate education, holistic education, lifelong learning and learning for all, learning about protecting and affirming “the other”, learning from and with the scriptures, etc. Our education should help us and our students to “be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect” as Jesus has said because our purpose of life, as put in the Catechism, is to know God, to love God and to be happy with God.

May God grant us peace.





Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective

— Pope Francis



World Council
of Churches

Preamble

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). This call to be peacemakers, offered to all disciples of Jesus Christ, is a privilege, a vocation and a challenge. Its key location as part of the opening of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount emphasizes its fundamental nature.

The urgency and universality of the call to followers of all religions and spiritual traditions to be peacemakers in our world is unquestionable. There are several contributing factors to violence today: poor governance, corruption, the rise of sectarianism, militant secularism, exclusive nationalism and populist movements, regional domination, and global economic inequalities. A particular aspect of most contemporary conflicts is the apparent and sometimes dramatic association between violence and religion. In several regions of our world, religion is manipulated and misused to justify conflict, aggression and the deliberate killing of human beings. However, the essence of true religion is to promote peace: authentic religion is thus not a part of the problem but a part of the solution.

Aware of this and of the moral responsibility of Christians, adherents of other religions and all people of goodwill to work together to respond to this reality, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID) and the Office of Inter-Religious Dialogue and Co-operation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) have produced this document which underscores the vital role that education can play in fostering a culture of peace. Drawing on the resources we hold in common as representatives of diverse Christian traditions, this document aims to make a constructive contribution to peacemaking through education in our multi-religious world.

Education for peace becomes imperative in our current context, which is characterised by the loss of human life, the destruction of homes, property and infrastructure, the immigration and refugee crises, the impact upon the environment, the traumatising of entire generations, and the use of finite resources to fuel the stockpiling of arms at

the expense of education and development. Our task becomes all the more important in the context of the increasing visibility of violence in the mass media, which could incite fear and hatred.

The purpose of this document is to encourage churches and Christian organizations to reflect on the structural roots of what has led to the disruption of peace in the world and on their own current practices and priorities in relation to education and peacemaking. At the same time, it is hoped that the document may assist a wider conversation on education for peace involving followers of other religions as well as social and political actors in our multi-religious world, taking into consideration specific historical and cultural contexts.

A Christian basis for education for peace

1. Christ is our peace (cf. Ephesians 2:14). The link between Jesus Christ and peace stands at the heart of Christian faith; and it is reflected in his birth, death on the Cross and resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The birth of Christ is marked by a divine proclamation of peace (cf. Luke 2:14). The primary word and gift of the Risen Lord to his disciples is peace (cf. Luke 24:36; John 20:21). It is a unique gift – “I do not give as the world gives” (John 14:27) – because it eliminates evil and violence at the very root.

2. As beneficiaries of Christ’s gift of peace, his disciples are called to be artisans of peace. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, sends his disciples as peace-givers: “When you enter a house, say: Peace to this house” (Luke 10:5). Even in the face of violence, he walked the path of nonviolence to the end. Further, he prevented his disciples from using violence to carry forward their mission (cf. Luke 9:54-55), or to protect him at the time of his own arrest (cf. Matthew 26:52). To proclaim peace is to announce Christ who is “our peace”. An important sign of the Spirit which is given to the disciples to mark the life of the Church is “peace” (cf. Galatians 5:22), and such peace needs to rule in their hearts to enable them to fulfil their calling as one body (cf. Colossians 3:15).

3. Peace is intrinsically linked to righteousness and justice, for “righteousness and peace will kiss each other” (Psalm 85:10) and to the right of all people to have the resources for a dignified life. The Hebrew word “shalom”, which underlies the biblical vision of peace, speaks of the harmony and flourishing of all creation. It tells us that peace with God, peace within oneself, peace with others, and peace with creation are all interrelated. Just as an act of violence marred the first creation (cf. Genesis 4:8), the presence of peace and wisdom is a mark of the new creation (cf. Isaiah 11:6ff).

4. The cherishing and valuing of education are intrinsic to Christian tradition and practice and owe much of their significance to the biblical wisdom tradition. The importance of Jesus’ own authoritative teaching role was noted by his contemporaries (cf. Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:22). His use of parables as a primary teaching tool showed his willingness to take seriously the life contexts and situations of those he was addressing. The word “disciple”, which is a key New Testament term for the followers of Jesus, emphasizes their role as “learners”.

5. Peace, also understood as the restoration of right relationships, brings out the fundamental links between sin, forgiveness and reconciliation. Such an understanding of peace in the Christian tradition finds its origin and centre in the cross and resurrection of Christ and its ongoing expression in the life of the Church, in particular in Baptism and the Eucharist (cf. Ephesians 2:14-18). Recognising the pre-eminent role of grace in the ministry of reconciliation is a constant reminder of the need for Christians to be self-critical and honest about our failings as peacemakers at many moments in human history.

6. Peacemaking entails paying attention to both the past and the future. Christian faith affirms the need to honour as well as heal past memories, when necessary, through forgiveness. Christ’s experience of suffering, death, and resurrection can challenge us to a different way of living, reconciling us with God and with one another. “While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through

the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10). Jesus’ teachings also underline the importance of restorative justice (cf. Luke 18:1-8). Redressing the grievances of the past needs to go hand in hand with care for the future. Such care requires serious commitment to appropriate educational processes for young people and a willingness to ensure that the future does not repeat the mistakes of the past and present.

7. Christian faith in the Triune God teaches that the divine persons are really distinct from, yet related to, one another. This can inspire peacebuilding in a multi-religious world. The analogy of the Trinitarian communion provides a pattern for Christian engagement with followers of other religions in a way which can hold together both communion and particularity. In the Holy Trinity, a “family” of three persons, there is unity in nature and distinction in persons. This “divine family” is not closed in on itself but is open to communion. God desires to incorporate us into this reality of communion. We are one human family and God calls us to understand ourselves as interrelated and interconnected and stimulates us to live in solidarity and mutual love and to work for reconciliation and peace.

Practical steps toward peacebuilding through education

Education for peace in a multi-religious world is a process that needs to include all ages and all sectors of society. Some of the following steps relate to children, others to young people and still others to adults.

1. The right to appropriate education for the contemporary world

A fundamental principle of peacebuilding is the right of all children, both boys and girls, to receive the kind of education that will equip them adequately to contribute as responsible adults in our contemporary world. This means that education for children must include exploration of natural and social sciences, humanities as well as practical engagement with modern technology. Religious education is important, but systems that focus only

or mainly on religious learning and practice to the exclusion or detriment of a wider curriculum are an abuse of the rights of the child. Education in which the curriculum for boys or girls is religiously limited on the grounds of gender is an abuse as well. Conversely, however, there can be contexts in which little space is offered for moral and humane values in education and, in such situations, the voice of religious communities becomes imperative.

2. Holistic education

Education needs to assist in developing the whole personality and thus needs to include physical, intellectual, moral, social and spiritual dimensions (cf. Luke 2:52). The family has a pre-eminent, early role in such holistic education which is important in preparing a person to become a healthy person who can contribute to a healthy society. However, this needs to be gradually complemented by a broader framework which continues to be holistic but which also prepares the child to engage constructively with wider society in a manner that respects cultural, religious and political differences. Educational systems need to offer opportunities for encouraging the plurality of society and for enabling effective encounter between different groups and communities. Families in which members come from different religious, ethnic, geographical or cultural backgrounds have particular challenges to meet and unique opportunities to offer. Educational programmes must be directed to the integral development of the human person and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of religion.

3. Education for human beings created in the image of God

The theological principle that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:27) needs to inform educational methodologies and practice. For Christians, this principle forms the basis for affirming the inherent dignity and worth of human beings. Therefore, children and young people, as recipients of education, need to be treated with due respect and dignity.

There is no place for violence in education. In this regard, corporal punishment of children cannot be acceptable. Moreover, punishment of children in any form which is detrimental to their health and development contravenes their dignity and rights. The physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people also fosters a climate in which violence is seen as acceptable or normal. By their behaviour toward the children in their charge, teachers are called to be a credible example of journeying together in peacebuilding and of fostering mutual respect between persons and communities.

4. The model of Jesus as teacher

As a teacher who was called “Rabbi” (cf. Mark 9:5; Matthew 26:49; John 1:38, 3:26), Jesus Christ himself provides a unique model for educators. His attentive care for and loving accompaniment of those with whom he engaged was a notable feature of his ministry. He engaged in dialogue with those he taught, often asking questions rather than simply giving them answers. Attentive to the contexts of his listeners, his characteristic method of teaching in parables invited them to become active participants in their own learning. Such a method of inductive learning is particularly important today, especially in learning contexts in which culture has sometimes inhibited questioning by children and by others receiving education. All need to be equipped with the tools that enable critical thinking and the use of reason. Education for peace should include the use of folk wisdom, parables, riddles and stories which encourage such processes. Non-book methods and sources of education, such as art, music and sports, can also enrich and enhance humanity. The importance given to “wisdom” within Christian scripture is a reminder that education involves the interweaving of mind, body and spirit and is more than merely the acquisition of facts.

5. Life-long learning and learning from all

Teaching necessarily includes listening and learning. An acknowledgement that we all have things to learn is an important safeguard to ensure that education always includes a dimension of openness which is essential for peacebuilding. Those

who are designated as religious leaders need to adopt and foster a culture in which continuing to learn throughout life is affirmed and celebrated. The relationship between teaching, authority and peacebuilding is complex. Leaders need also to be learners. It is important to remember that Jesus pointed to a child as the one from whom his disciples should learn (cf. Mark 10:15). Education needs to become an inclusive process, affirming especially the roles of women and children. In this respect, the role of the dialogue of life in inter-religious encounters, which offers more possibilities of mutual and inclusive learning, needs to be recognised.

6. Peace and power

In biblical revelation, peace is much more than the simple absence of war. It is characterised by the flourishing of all life and right relationships. Christians affirm that there is an intrinsic connection between peace, justice and reconciliation. Since abuse of power is often at the heart of conflicts, inequality and discrimination, education for peace should include engagement with the question of power. Peacebuilding in the context of violence and conflicts involves speaking truth to power, through nonviolent means, in solidarity with the voiceless. We are called to speak the truth in love (cf. Ephesians 4:15). Education should help shape notions of leadership and power in terms of humility and service (cf. Mark 10:45), encouraging self-critical attitudes and forgiveness, promoting collaboration and helping to prevent and overcome arrogance. Educational methodologies should encourage collaboration as well as healthy competition.

7. Learning about, protecting and affirming “the other”

Education needs to encourage a positive vision of human beings who are different from us in ethnicity or religion and who are often referred to as the “other” (cf. Matthew 7:12). Any inadequacy and inaccuracy in the presentation of other religions, or minority communities, in situations where members of a particular religious or ethnic group control educational systems and curricula, needs

to be addressed. Such bias against minorities may affect not only the curriculum for religious education but also the curricula for other subjects such as history and literature. It can foster a perception that members of the “other” community are not fully or equally citizens of a nation or that they have not contributed to nation building. It is essential that, in all countries, learning about the faith and experience of such others regularly forms part of education ideally in a way that enables these others to contribute to the process. It is essential, in order to avoid distortion or invisibility, that textbooks that are used to teach about the faith and history of minority religious communities are written, or at least checked, by representatives of the communities themselves. In addition, members of all religious communities need a solid formation in their own religious tradition, as well as good information about the others, as a background to dialogue. When learning about their own religious tradition, people need to do so in a way that does not foster arrogance.

8. Use of media in peace education

“The truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

Communication is part of God’s plan to lead human beings toward recognition of truth and affirmation of freedom and universal fraternity. The negative use of information and communication technologies to promote discord and conflict is well known. In this era of mass communication, it is important therefore to make positive use of social media and other means of communication as instruments of education for peace taking into account local needs and practicalities. This is vital for countering the spread of “fake news”. In this regard, it is important to create educational programmes aimed at developing skills to identify and combat the scourge of biased and baseless information, as well as xenophobic narratives.

9. Learning from and with our scriptures

For adults, as well as children and young people, the need for serious engagement with their respective scriptures is an important tool in education for peace. It needs, however, to be acknowledged that there are texts in the scriptures of most world

religions, including Christian scriptures, that can be, and often have been, interpreted as tolerating or encouraging discrimination and violence. In such contexts, education for peace should foster critical reflection on difficult texts and help rethink patterns and practices of interpretation, encouraging a holistic and positive approach to scripture. Engagement with scripture should go beyond repeating and memorizing particular texts and involve grappling with the tools that the religious tradition itself has developed as a means of interpretation. Without Jesus and the gospels, we are not Christians. Therefore, the primacy of the gospels within the Christian canon, and the need to read other parts of scripture in the light of the gospels, is a significant interpretative principle for Christians. Other religions have their own criteria to interpret texts. As Christians, we need to share our efforts at biblical interpretation both with other Christians and with followers of other religions. We can also learn from the ways in which others interpret their sacred texts. The recent method of “Scriptural Reasoning” is one setting in which this shared learning happens.

10. Worship, spirituality and education for peace

Worship and spirituality are important means of education for peace because of their didactic and transformative nature. Public worship offers many opportunities to advance the cause of peacebuilding, and yet recent history has taught us that it can also be a potential driver of conflict. Worship consciously or unconsciously shapes the attitude and behaviour of the believer. Certain scripture passages, religious texts, reflections, preaching and prayers can either help build peace or lead to feelings of hostility and tension. Genuine prayer enables us to become more aware of our own failings, our need of grace and of conversion. It can thus become an antidote to fundamentalism and religiously instigated violence and can transform hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (cf. Ezekiel 36:26). Conversely, the relationship between peacebuilding and the reconciling potential of the Eucharist needs to be explored. The cleansing, purifying and reshaping of memories, and redirecting them into the larger frame of God’s design

for humanity is at the core of our communion with Christ in worship. The sharing of peace, which is an integral part of the eucharistic liturgy, offers a visible and powerful symbol of peace and reconciliation. At the end of the liturgy, we are sent out to share with others the peace we have experienced through our worship. Spirituality is “the art of transfiguration”. It is a process that begins with personal transformation and then extends to reconciling all of humanity and the healing of the earth. Through our dialogue with God, we begin to express our hope for “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). In this way, we lay the foundations for a peaceful world.

11. Prevention and reconciliation

If education for peace is to be effective, it needs to be aimed at preventing violence and fostering reconciliation. Programmes that include truth-telling and the healing of memories have proved to be especially effective in this regard. Education for peace which focuses on healing can enable victims of violence to overcome physical, psychological and emotional trauma and then, in turn, become reconcilers themselves. The crucified and risen Christ who bears the marks of the Cross yet holds the promise of a New Creation, calls his followers to become, after his example, ambassadors of reconciliation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

12. Integrating development and ecological perspectives

Peace is related to sustainable development and the integrity of creation. The present context of inequality and “globalization of indifference” is a grave threat to peace. Hence, education for peace needs to integrate developmental and ecological perspectives that aim at eradicating poverty and injustice, protecting the environment, ensuring the development of every person and of the whole person and fostering harmony and stability of the whole creation. Today’s ecological crisis is an ego crisis which is deeply detrimental to peace and the well-being of all. The threat that climate change poses to the earth, “our common home”, summons us to include ecological commitment as an integral aspect of education for peace. There is a need to

introduce educational programmes which promote a new and inter-connected way of thinking about our relationships with the divine, the human and nature. Such education can take place in a variety of settings: families, schools, religious communities, workplaces and the media.

Recommendations

The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Office for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Co-operation of the World Council of Churches offer this document for prayerful reflection to the churches, Christian educational institutions and the national and regional confessional and ecumenical bodies recommending them to:

Study the document and reflect on what could be effective and contextually relevant methods of education for peace, that can be implemented ecumenically or, where possible, inter-religiously, taking into account ethnic, religious, cultural and inter-generational factors.

Develop educational resources and curricula that focus not only on the promotion of knowledge, attitudes and values essential for peacemaking but also on developing skills along with goodwill to translate them into concrete action and behavioural practice. Enhancing the capacity for behavioural change is essential to education for peace. It should involve elements of prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Identify potential partners with whom creative, interactive, learner-centred educational tools can be developed for various levels: family, religious communities, educational institutions and the wider society. Such tools should pay attention to both traditional means of peacebuilding as well as modern means, such as the internet and social media, to counter violence and cultivate peace.

Examine and challenge the past and present structural factors that have contributed to violence either in specific societies, or between different peoples, and develop an integrated approach to education for peace, taking into consideration how issues relating to religion, economics, politics, gender, culture and ecology sow seeds of violence and conflict.

Encourage Christian institutions of learning and church agencies, particularly those offering

catechetical programmes for children and young people, to integrate elements of education for peace in spiritual and human formation.

Audit how elements of religious life, including scriptural engagement, public worship, prayer and liturgy, can contribute to fostering human solidarity for a more just and peaceful society.

Request Christians from constituencies across the world to study prayerfully the document “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World:

Recommendations for Conduct” to overcome disputes related to conflicting understandings of mission, conversion and proselytism. It is important to recognize that Christian disunity scandalizes the world, hinders common witness and damages the cause of peacebuilding.

Recollect the life stories of extraordinary persons who have wrestled ecumenically and inter-religiously with questions of justice and peace and ecological well-being. It is important to learn how such people have been able to share a common ethical vision on peace and justice while deeply rooted in their respective Christian and religious identities.

Call on governments to shape education in ways that promote and prioritise peace as a means toward strengthening fundamental human rights and safeguarding the dignity of all, dispelling injustice and discrimination, respecting legitimate differences and enabling greater openness to the other.

Pray together for the cause of peace. Prayer awakens our conscience, expels inner fears, heals wounds, disarms the violent, tears down walls of enmity, facilitates forgiving and pardoning, brings about reconciliation, opens hearts to the cries of suffering, urges us to eradicate social sins, enables us to see everyone as our brother or sister and transforms us to be peacemakers.



The Need for “Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective”

— Dr. (Fr.) Sebastian M. Michael SVD

Education is one of the main ministries of the Archdiocese of Bombay. We have a number of schools and other educational institutions run by both, the Archdiocese as well as religious congregations. The sheer number of students under our care makes us to be accountable to make them responsible citizens to create a just and humane world.

In this context, a recently presented document **“Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective”** by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) becomes very vital in preparing educational policies for the Archdiocese.

Reading the signs of our times at the increasingly conflict-ridden world of today, the Christian initiative to promote “peace” is commendable. On 21st May, 2019, during the conference on “Promoting Peace Together” at Geneva, in the presence of several religious leaders and representatives from Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office, Christian churches unitedly presented a visionary document to promote and build “Peace through Christian Education”. Though this document directly addresses the Christian educational institutions, it is expected that the document will generate a broad interaction on education for peace involving followers of other religions and social and political actors.

In several regions of our world, religion is manipulated and misused to justify conflict, aggression and the deliberate killing of human beings. However, the essence of true religion is to promote peace: authentic religion is thus not a part of the problem but a part of the solution. In this context, education can play a vital, indeed essential, role in resolving conflicts, preventing their recurrence, healing the wounded, restoring justice and upholding the equal dignity of all.

The document is divided into three sections. The first section gives reasons why Christians should engage in education for peace. The second section points to areas and strategies for implementing peacebuilding through education. The final part offers recommendations for education for peace.

The foundation of Christian faith demands promotion of peace among all human beings and the universe. From the Annunciation to the Ascension of Jesus, the proclamation of peace runs as a uniting thread through our salvation history. As beneficiaries of Christ’s gift of peace, his disciples are called to be artisans of peace. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, sends his disciples as peace-givers. Hence promotion of peace should be an integral part of Christian education.

This document **“Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective”** tells us that peace with God, peace within oneself, peace with others and peace with creation are all interrelated. Hence, Christian education needs to foster interconnectedness, critical consciousness and freedom as key aspects for the spiritual development of children and youth, and to cultivate genuine inter-faith learning and solidarity.

The document lists a number of practical suggestions for the Christian educational institutions to incorporate peacebuilding in the curricula.

1. A fundamental principle of peacebuilding is the right of all children, both boys and girls, to receive the kind of education that will equip them adequately to contribute as responsible adults in our contemporary world. This means that education for children must include exploration of natural and social sciences, humanities as well as practical engagement with modern technology.
2. Education needs to assist in developing the whole personality, and thus needs to include physical, intellectual, moral, social and spiritual

dimensions (cf. Luke 2:52). The family has a pre-eminent role in this.

3. The theological principle that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:27) needs to inform educational methodologies and practice. For Christians, this principle forms the basis for affirming the **inherent dignity and worth of human beings**. Therefore, children and young people, as recipients of education, need to be treated with due respect and dignity.

4. Jesus Christ himself provides a unique model for educators. His attentive care for and loving accompaniment of those with whom he engaged was a notable feature of his ministry. He engaged in dialogue with those he taught, often asking questions rather than simply giving them answers. Attentive to the contexts of his listeners, his characteristic method of teaching in parables invited them to become active participants in their own learning. Such a method of inductive learning is particularly important today, especially in learning contexts in which culture has sometimes inhibited questioning by children and by others receiving education. Education involves the interweaving of mind, body, and spirit and is more than merely the acquisition of facts.

5. Education involves life-long learning and learning from all. Teaching necessarily includes listening and learning. An acknowledgement that we all have things to learn is an important safeguard to ensure that education always includes a dimension of openness, which is essential for peacebuilding.

6. In biblical revelation, peace is much more than the simple absence of war. It is characterised by the flourishing of all life and right relationships. Since abuse of power is often at the heart of conflicts, inequality and discrimination, education for peace should include engagement with the question of power. Education should help shape notions of leadership and power in terms of humility and service.

7. Education needs to encourage a positive vision of human beings who are different from us in ethnicity or religion and who are often referred to as the “other”. Any inadequacy and inaccuracy in the

presentation of other religions or minority communities should be avoided. In addition, members of all religious communities need a solid formation in their own religious tradition, as well as good information about the others, as a background to dialogue.

8. In this era of mass communication, it is important to make positive use of social media and other means of communication to counter the spread of “fake news” and distorted information about religions.

9. Education for peace which focuses on healing can enable victims of violence to overcome physical, psychological and emotional trauma and then, in turn, become reconcilers themselves.

10. Peace is related to sustainable development and the integrity of creation. Hence, education for peace needs to integrate developmental and ecological perspectives that aim at eradicating poverty and injustice, protecting the environment, ensuring the development of every person and of the whole person, and fostering harmony and stability of the whole creation.

The Christian initiative for promoting peace through education is the need of the hour. Under the patronage of Oswald Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, efforts have been made by the Archdiocesan Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue through various initiatives in the schools of the Archdiocese of Bombay and also through the Inter-Religious Dialogue cells in the parishes of the Archdiocese. Now, with this concrete expression, efforts will be made to implement this document in practical terms in the Archdiocese of Bombay especially through the Archdiocesan Board of Education (ABE).

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Let's Teach Peace. Later May Be

Too Late'

— Dr. (Fr.) Peter Gonsalves SDB

It is said that violence begets violence; that children learn violence from personal experience with adults in homes and schools.

To check the veracity of this assumption, a unique² study on violence in primary schools was undertaken by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in the academic year 2009-10. The study was published as *Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools*.³ Out of a total of 6,632 children who were interviewed across 7 states,⁴ only 9 denied having received any kind of punishment – that is, 99.8% had experienced punishment of one kind or another. Of the types of punishments received, verbal punishments or abuses were the highest at 81.2%. These consisted of animal name-calling (41.7%), gender-based abuse (14.5%) and caste or community-based abuse (10.1%). Out of the total of physical-contact punishments, some of the most frequent kinds were beating with a cane (75%), slapping on the cheeks (60.9%), hitting on the back (57.5%), boxing the ears (57.4%), pinching (26.9%), and hair pulling, especially of girls (21.6%). The postural punishments included standing outside the classroom (53%), standing with hands raised (42.7%), *murga banana*⁵ (41.4%) and kneeling (38.8%).⁶

The age-wise and gender-wise comparative study of corporal punishments are shown in Table 1 below. The popular belief that younger children are less exposed to punishments is not tenable. The data reveals that punishments begin at the Pre-primary stage and the idea of the “joy of schooling” is still a dream for many.

AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF TOP SIX PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS ⁷						
Age group	Beaten by cane	Slapped on cheek	Beaten on back	Ears getting boxed	Beaten on hand	Pinched
3-5 yrs	65.4%	60.7%	50.5%	59.8%	37.4%	29.9%
10-14 yrs	76.0%	70.0%	58.3%	57.3%	51.8%	27.0%
GENDER-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF TOP SIX PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS (%)						
Sex	Beaten by cane	Slapped on cheek	Beaten on back	Ears getting boxed	Beaten on hand	Pinched
Boys	78.0%	71.9%	59.8%	60.7%	53.0%	78.0%
Girls	71.1%	67.1%	53.9%	53.5%	48.5%	71.1%

Table 1: Six physical punishments according to age and gender (NCPCR Survey 2010)

¹ This is an excerpt from the article by the same author: *Peace Education for India - an idea whose time has come back*, Jesu Pudumai Doss and Sahayadas Fernando (Eds), *Prophets with Wings, Accompanying the young in today's India* (New Delhi: AIDBES, 2018), pp. 161-183. See also, *Vidyajyoti Journal*, 82 (2018) 808-831.

² The study was conceptualized to research the scale and magnitude of corporal punishment in the everyday school experiences of India's children. Its objective was to interview children directly, bypassing adults, in order to know exactly children's perspectives on what they experienced. *Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools*, in National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Government of India, released on 5 March 2012: <http://www.ncpcr.gov.in/showfile.php?lang=1&level=2&&sublinkid=143&lid=153> (accessed: 5-10-2017).

³ *Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools*, p. 11.

⁴ The states were Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.

⁵ *Murga banana* literally means “become a chicken”. The punished person has to bend double in order to hold the ears from behind the legs and to remain in this painful and humiliating posture until ordered to stop.

⁶ *Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools*, p. 16.

⁷ *Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools*, pp.19-20.

In 2010, the Ministry of Women and Child Development issued a new set of guidelines that banned physical punishment of students. Since then, heads of schools are held responsible, and teachers found guilty could be denied increments and promotions and could even be sent to jail. However, enforcement of the law is lax.⁸ Yet, to be fair to teachers, the reason of violence in schools can be linked to poor infrastructure, a disproportionate pupil-teacher ratio, and a lack of teacher-training in alternative nonviolent education.⁹

On bringing together the situation of violence in Indian society and the data on violence experienced by children in educational institutions, we are confronted with an uncomfortable question: *Could it be that India's educational system today is inadvertently spawning the very criminals it will struggle to contain tomorrow?*

The science of child psychology has amply demonstrated that violence on children causes grave damage to their self-perception and social relationships, promoting thereby a culture of *dishonesty* and *aggression*.¹⁰ We present below some of the conclusions of various studies undertaken: A punitive environment may foster children's tendencies to lie and to conceal their transgressions.¹¹ "Deception is a covert adaptive strategy particularly suited for the young and the weak because other strategies such as physical violence are often not an option for them."¹² "Since punishments give pain, they tend to teach children that, at least under some conditions, it is all right to give pain to others. Thus, aggression is an externalized behaviour which punishments can cause."¹³ "Everyone understands that corporal punishment is carried out to correct or control misbehaviour. What is not understood is that almost all assaults by adults are also carried out to correct what the offender perceives as misbehaviour."¹⁴ When aggressive adults find an ideology they can cling to for psychological, social and economic subterfuge, the fanatic is born; and, in the long run, corporal punishment renders juveniles easy fodder for extremists and terrorists who use violence to serve their ends.¹⁵

The effects of violence influence the way children relate to each other. The phenomenon of bullying, which has reached "epic proportions"¹⁶ in India, is a case in point. Furthermore, when physically punished children become adults, they are more likely to practice corporal punishment on their own children. "Parents,

⁸ A study carried out by Child Line India Foundation between 2009 and 2011 revealed that students experienced corporal punishment in almost 95% of the 198 schools in 11 states studied, despite it being prohibited. Only 6% of the government schools studied and 4% of the private schools studied were free of corporal punishment. Shukla Jyoti - Singh Neetu, "Implications of corporal punishment on primary school children" in IOSR, Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 15/6 (2013) pp. 57.

⁹ Pallavi Polanki, "Corporal Punishment: Time to jail the teacher?" in First Post, 28-06-2012, <http://www.firstpost.com/india/corporal-punishment-time-to-jail-the-teacher-360797.html> (02-07-2017).

¹⁰ Some examples are Elizabeth T. Gershoff, "More harm than good: A summary of scientific research on the intended and unintended effects of corporal punishment on children" in Law & Contemporary Problems, 73/2 (2010) pp. 31-56; K. Maguire-Jack - A. N. Gromoske - L. M. Berger, "Spanking and child development during the first 5 years of life", in Child Development, 83/6 (2012) pp. 1960-1977; and B. B. Boutwell - C. A. Franklin, et al., "Physical punishment and childhood aggression: the role of gender and gene-environment interplay", in Aggressive Behavior, 37 (2011) pp. 559-568.

¹¹ Cf. Victoria Talwar - Kang Lee, "A Punitive Environment Fosters Children's Dishonesty: A Natural Experiment" in Child Development, November, 82/6 (2011) pp.1751-1758.

¹² Talwar - Lee, "A Punitive Environment Fosters Children's Dishonesty", p.1751.

¹³ Joan McCord, "Unintended Consequences of Punishment" in Pediatrics, October 98/4 (1996), abstract: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/98/4/832> (accessed: 12-03-2018).

¹⁴ Murray A. Straus, "Spanking and the Making of a Violent Society" in Pediatrics, October,98/4 (1996) abstract: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/98/4/837> (accessed: 12-03-2018).

¹⁵ Cf. Muhammad Shahbaz Arif - Muhammad Shaban Rafi, "Effects of Corporal Punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and behaviour" in Journal of Theory and Practice in Education, 3/2 (2007) pp. 171-180.

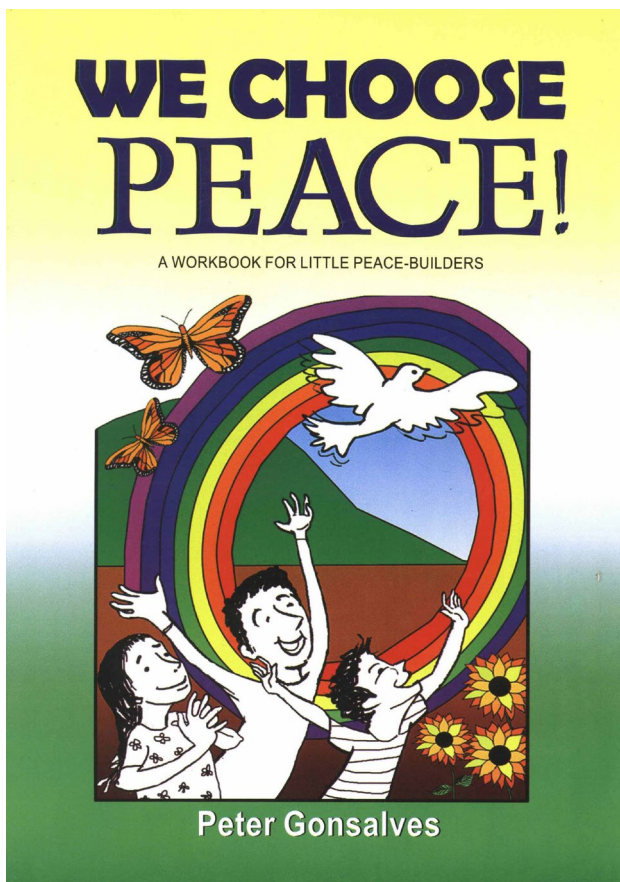
¹⁶ "Bullying in India Reaches Epic Proportions", in NOBullying.com, 26-03-2017 <https://nobllying.com/bullying-in-india-2/> (accessed: 02-03-2018). See also: Kaushambi, "India Has 3rd Highest Online Bullying Rate [Survey]", in Trak.in, 29-09-2017, <http://trak.in/tags/business/2012/06/27/india-3rd-highest-cyber-online-bullying-survey/> (accessed: 02-03-2018).

after all, learn most of their lessons about how to be a parent from their own parents”.¹⁷ Thus the maelstrom of violence entraps and enforces generations in a culture of discord and conflict. How do we put a halt to the madness? Is there a way out of the vortex?

In 1931, at a conference delivered to teachers at the Italian school of the world-renowned educator Maria Montessori, Mahatma Gandhi provided an answer:

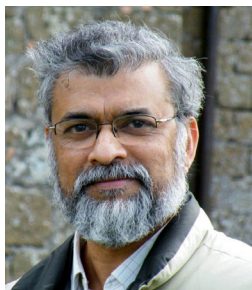
If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have the struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.¹⁸

It is never too late to take Gandhi's intuition seriously. The Archdiocese of Bombay's attempt to put Peace Education at the centre of value education through teacher training programmes in August 2019 is a concerted effort at making strategies for nonviolence an integral part of the education system. This move, if assiduously implemented, is sure to form persons who “think peace” for a brighter and better tomorrow. The Peace Education resources for teachers, Exercises in Peace Education and the students' workbook *We Choose Peace* were rewritten and updated in 2018 precisely to meet this noble end. They are both available for free download at the author's website www.petergonsalves.in.



¹⁷ Elizabeth Gershoff, More harm than good: A summary of scientific research on the intended and unintended effects of corporal punishment on children, *Law & Contemporary Problems*, 73/2 (2010), p. 32.

¹⁸ This excerpt is taken from Gandhi's speech which was delivered at the Montessori Training College, London, on October 28, 1931, and published in *Young India*, 19-11-1931.



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Message for Eid Milan



Oswald Cardinal Gracias, head of the Catholic Church in India, was the chief guest of the Eid Milan function organized by Jamiat-ul-Ulema in New Delhi on 10th June, 2019. This religious festival after Ramadan was organised at the national level by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, one of the biggest Muslim congregations in India. Given below is the text of Cardinal Gracias' address at the event.

My brother Maulana Mamood Madani, General Secretary of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind,
Very distinguished guests, many of whom I know and are good friends,
My brothers and sisters of one big family.

I bring you warm greetings from the Catholic Church in India. I bring you greetings indeed from the whole Christian community in India as you have this Eid Milan and celebrate 100 years of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind.

It is a singular honour for all of us to join together in a special way with our brothers and sisters of the Islamic religious tradition. At this moment, as we celebrate this Eid Milan, all of us feel a strong bond of affection for the whole Muslim community. God has brought us together today to celebrate this evening.

You have just completed your month of fasting, Ramadan. The fasting has helped you spend time reconnecting with God in prayer, strengthening your feelings of love for the needy through the practice of Zakat and has also bonded every family together more. Ramadan, though a month of fasting, has not been a month of pain but a period of joy because you have experienced the peace of God in your homes and in your persons.

The Ramadan fast reminds me of our own Christian fast at the time of Lent. Lent is similar in many ways to Ramadan and is meant to set aside time for God to recollect and bond with the sufferings of Jesus Christ, who was crucified on the Cross, and died for us.

At this moment, may I recollect the very successful and fruitful visit of Pope Francis to Abu Dhabi on 4th February earlier this year when he signed the historic document “On Human Fraternity” together with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar.



That joint document gave us much to ponder on and publicly committed all Muslims and all Christians to adopt a culture of dialogue as a path, mutual co-operation as a code of conduct and reciprocal understanding as the method and standard. It declared that the most important causes of the crises in the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and the prevailing individualism accompanied by a materialistic philosophy. As a result, we have so many conflicts, violence, wars and a lack of peace.

Our call then is to promote human fraternity – all of us are children of God, brothers and sisters of one big family. All of us are called to imbibe and live a culture of dialogue.

Dialogue, we know, can be of different types: a dialogue of life when we live with each other, celebrate feasts in common, as today, and thus come closer. Dialogue of action is when we work together on projects for the common good. A dialogue of exchange is when we exchange thoughts, discuss different matters and come to understand each other at a deeper level.

A month ago, my brother, Maulana Madani, together with some colleagues, visited me in Mumbai and together, we condemned the horrific attacks on the churches in Colombo. I have returned his visit by coming here today and joining him in proclaiming the importance of human fraternity.

Thank you for the invitation to come here. Thank you for helping us to work together. All of us together must strengthen and build a brighter India – where there is harmony, peace and progress.

Jai Hind!
God bless you!



Jean Vanier: The Compassionate Hero (1928 – 2019)

— Vanessa D’Cruz



Love it was that made us and it was love that saved us
Love was God’s plan when He made man
God’s divine nature is love

We may have come across these lines at some point in our lives but have we pondered over the lovely meaning it has for us?

“Love doesn’t mean doing extraordinary or heroic things. It means knowing how to do ordinary things with tenderness.” Love was the mantra of this man who lived his life for people with intellectual disabilities. How can we describe this man of greatness? A philosopher, writer, religious and moral leader, founder of communities for people with and without intellectual disabilities... and, above all, a follower of Jesus.

Jean Vanier was born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1928 to a prominent Canadian diplomatic family. He grew up in France until his family fled the impending Nazi invasion in 1940. The family moved to Canada and shortly thereafter, at age 13, he decided to join the British Royal Navy and began his studies at an English naval academy.

He served in World War II with both, the British Royal Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy. In 1945, while on leave from his military service, he

joined his mother volunteering at the Paris railway station where survivors of the Nazi concentration camps arrived after their liberation. He could never forget the men and women who arrived off the trains – like skeletons, still in the blue-and-white striped uniforms of the concentration camps, their faces tortured with fear and anguish. That, and the dropping of the atom bombs, strengthened a feeling in him that the navy was no longer the place for him. He felt his adolescent years were taken up in the world of efficiency; controlling and commanding others. He called himself a technician of destruction.

In his later years, he visited an institution for people with intellectual disabilities. Their profound “cry for relationship” touched his heart. He wanted to devote himself to the works of peace. His response was simple: buy a house and invite a few men with intellectual disabilities to come and live with him. This was the start of L’Arche. Today L’Arche (“the ark” in French) has 154 communities in 38 countries, including 9 in India, supporting 3,500 people with learning disabilities, with day services as well as residential homes. Most of the communities are small and residents often stay for



decades. This is because there is a sense of belonging for all those living there.

A few years later, he co-founded the Faith and Light movement with Marie-Hélène Mathieu. Carried by a wave of enthusiasm, both communities spread across the world. He inspired Faith and Sharing in North America and Faith and Friendship in Northern Ireland. Intercordia, another inspiration of Vanier, encouraged students to live an inter-cultural experience among poor and marginalised people in developing countries.

He was a **Man of Great Faith**. His deepest desire was to follow Jesus, from whom he received his inspiration and support, and to live the gospel radically and faithfully. He was able to read and interpret the Christian gaze on “the mystery of death, of the Cross, of suffering”, on “the mystery of those who are discarded by the world”. Having given up the search for impact and status, he encountered people with intellectual disabilities and discovered a fullness of life and joy in the littleness of daily life with them.

In God’s world, people are more important than facts or methods or curriculum. Who you are as a

teacher is of primary importance. Your faith in God and love of all God’s people will have the greatest influence on students. This is true whether you teach children, youth, adults or children who are differently abled. Just like Jean Vanier, we should strongly believe that God is hidden in the heart of the smallest of all, in the weakest of all, and if we commit ourselves to Him, we would open a new world.

Vanier was a **Man of Presence** and a **great listener**. He inspired countless people. Many people would say that they felt better in his presence; they felt loved and heard. Angelika Mandaiker from India was so touched by the way he listened; by the way he was present to each person. Many felt a call to change their lives and discovered their life’s purpose. What he did was his Vocation. Teaching too is a great vocation – a vocation of love for one’s students. Loving someone does not mean simply doing things for them. To love someone is to show to them their beauty, their worth and their importance; it is to understand them, understand their cries and their body language. We, as teachers, are called to be present to our students, giving them a listening ear especially those who are lagging behind. With our love and care, we can surely

make them realise their worth in this world.

Vanier believed in **forgiveness**. He learnt over the years that forgiveness is at the heart of the community. Forgiveness comes from love. At the last international L'Arche meeting he attended, he asked forgiveness from anyone he might have hurt through his single-mindedness on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities. The greatness of a person lies in his heart. He believed that we can change the world, one heart at a time, the first heart being our own.

As teachers, we may hold our own grudges and bias towards certain students who may have hurt us, yet we are called to be role models, just like Jean Vanier, to forgive and help students do the same. Thus, we will be able to celebrate the goodness that each of our students possess.

Vanier's life dream was to reveal the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities – gifts of the heart, to a world in need of such gifts. He discovered that the one who is different is not a threat to be feared but a treasure that can enrich our lives. As a **Messenger**, he wanted the world to be aware of his insights into human vulnerability, community and spirituality by writing over 30 books, translated into 29 languages, and was filmed many times too.



The world has so many lessons to teach us. We are fortunate enough to live in a world that includes people like Jean Vanier who led an exemplary life. He believed in the strength of many – the power of living as a community as it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we cannot do as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.

Jean Vanier died on 7th May, 2019. His death doesn't end anything. He has left an indelible mark in the world and in the lives of many. We may be very busy in our daily lives and each day may be a challenge for us all but when you are doing the work you are meant to do, it feels right and every day is a bonus regardless of what you are paid.

We have been enriched in countless ways. There is no better way to make our mark on the world than to share that abundance with others. Our constant prayer for ourselves should be to be used in service for the greater good. So, Dr. King said, "Not everybody can be famous. But everybody can be great because greatness is determined by service."

Let us thank God for giving us Jean Vanier, a man of such great witness. May we take inspiration from him and, in turn, walk in his ways. As he said, "We do not have to be saviours of the world. We are simply human beings, enfolded in weakness and in hope, called together to change our world one heart at a time."



Peter Tabichi wins Global Teacher Prize 2019

Peter Tabichi, a Maths and Physics teacher at Keriko Secondary School in Pwani village, in a remote part of Kenya's Rift Valley, has won the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2019. He beat 10,000 nominations from 179 countries to be crowned the world's best teacher and win a \$1m prize.

Tabichi, a member of the Franciscan religious order, gives away 80% of his income to help the poorest students at the poorly-equipped and overcrowded school who could not otherwise afford uniforms and books.

The prize was set up to highlight the vital role teachers play in society. Sunny Varkey, founder of the Varkey Foundation, said he hoped Tabichi's story would encourage others to enter the profession and "shine a spotlight on the truly inspiring work teachers do to make tomorrow brighter than today".



Pope to Scholas Occurrentes: Young people are the NOW of God

During a visit to the new Rome office of Scholas Occurrentes on 21st March, 2019, Pope Francis held a video conference with young people from around the world and listened to testimonies from children who had participated in the artistic, sport and technology programmes promoted by Scholas.

During the conversation with students present, Pope Francis encouraged everyone to engage in the important, yet at times difficult, work of "networking" by sharing skills, professionalism and creativity. "The young have an unimaginable power, they are creative," Pope Francis said. He insisted on the need to embrace their creativity, and not to "domesticate" them. "Young people are not the future," he said. "They are the present, the today, the 'now' of God. We must correct this expression."

His encounter with the young people ended with a symbolic gesture: some of the children filled vessels with blessed water from a spring and distributed it to all those present. "May God make us living water!" the Pope prayed. He then returned to the Vatican, after personally greeting each of the children present.



I Wish...!!

— Vanessa D'Cruz

We are all aware that an investment in knowledge pays the best interest. Hence, we can gauge that educating a child is of prime importance today. The Government of India, today, is trying its best to reach out to every child in the country, seeking their best interest. We have seen several changes in the educational system; right from the ancient Vedic period propagating the Gurukul system right up to the Modern age using the best of technology. There are questions that we constantly ask ourselves – Is this enough? Are the children in India able to face up to global expectations? To meet these expectations, the Government has been constantly and frequently adapting to change. But are these changes having the desired impact on the student fraternity?

After the recent SSC results in Maharashtra, we decided to conduct an opinion poll. We interviewed a few principals, teachers, parents and students in Mumbai. We asked them if the EduFOCUS Genie had to grant them 3 wishes for SSC 2020, what changes would they like to see? These are the responses we received.



20/20 vision is a term used to refer to visual acuity or clarity and sharpness of vision. The WHO also has a Vision 2020 programme which envisages a world where nobody is needlessly visually impaired. Applying these analogies to my vision for SSC 2020, I wish for...

1. Clarity of vision for the planners of the evaluation system for our Std. X students; that they will consider the best interest of these youngsters and develop a fair system which takes into account all learners.
2. Some kind of parity in the assessment of all the boards, so that at the time of admission all students are dealt a fair hand.
3. A 100% pass percentage for all schools and if this is too improbable then definitely a marked increase in the SSC pass percentage which has always been very low compared to CBSE or ICSE or the international boards.

(Ms. Anna Correa, Principal, St. Stanislaus High School, Bandra)

1. The timetable of SSC exam should be as per that of ICSE; on the same days with the same time gap between subjects.
2. The marking system and type of questions should be similar to the ICSE pattern. Internal assessments should be uniformly followed for all the boards.
3. Std. IX exam pattern should be similar to the SSC exam pattern and well-planned by the Education Department in advance.

(Sr. Gloria Ferrao, Principal, Auxilium Convent High School, Wadala)



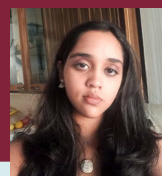
1. There should be internal marks added to motivate the students, especially the weaker ones.
2. The change in textbooks and syllabus needs to be carefully planned and executed.
3. Rote learning should be removed and encouragement should be given to understanding of the subject and creative learning.
4. Instead of different boards and competing methodologies of teaching, unification of the boards would help to bring them under one common education system to have uniformity.

(Parent community, Don Bosco High School, Matunga - collated by Lakshmi Krishna)



1. Internals should start.
2. More chances of getting full marks for SSC students should be given.
3. Correction should be made easier.

(Sara Sakarkute, student)



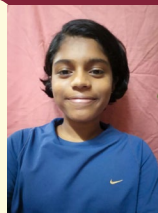
There should be more education-related activities and internal marks should be started.

(Tanisha Mangavkar, student)

1. Firstly, dear Genie, I would really love if marks were assigned for practical exams.

2. There should be more marks given for journals because the whole year we work soooo hard to complete it and after doing all this, we get only 2 marks!!!

(Ann-Marie, student)



Dear Genie,

1. May every subject teacher receive the board papers of their subject. May no one shirk (except for a genuine reason) or be burdened with extra correction.
2. May the student be marked for their understanding of the subject and not as per word-to-word rote excellence. Thus, the essence of a student's knowledge is assessed.
3. May the question papers not reflect the passionate knowledge of the paper-setter but be set according to the course book and its matter. But before all this, Genie, please see that educationists run the education system of our country.

(Mrs. Mary John, professor)



Dear Genie,

All students who have really studied hard should pass with flying colours. There should be no partiality or bribery involved in corrections by the Board. Students are sincere and honest to themselves.

(Pearl Biju, parent)

1. Internal marks should be given for all subjects as in the past.
2. Regular tests should be conducted in class on weekly basis so the children study regularly and are prepared for exams. Thus, mistakes can be discussed and the child can improve.
3. Fine arts subjects like Drawing, Dance, Music should be included in the syllabus and be a part of the curriculum so students get the opportunity to choose their subjects from Std. VIII and can pursue their career according to their skill.
4. Maths and Science should not be made compulsory for all students to study.

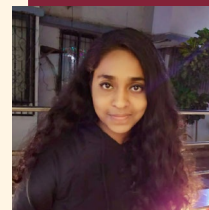
(Anjali Ramesh, student)

1. I think I will ask the Genie to please assign marks for extra-curricular activities as many students pursue their hobbies and put in hours of practice despite their busy schedule.

2. Genie, please do something to include Performing Arts in the choice of subjects because, if someone wants to pursue Arts in the future, they need not spend hours learning anything else.

3. Lastly, I would wish for increasing the time limit of language papers because the 'Writing Skills' section is supposed to be the most creative and imaginative part of the paper but the sad part is I don't get time to use my imagination.

(Suha Shaikh, student)



1. I would wish for some more practice papers as we put in a lot of hard work. If we don't know what to study, it's just a waste of time as it is said "study smart not hard".

2. Secondly, I would really wish for a better textbook in which concepts are explained more clearly.

3. The students should get more practice papers to solve.

(Jheel Punmiya, student)



1. I wish for uniformity in curricula across all boards.

2. The quality of teachers, too, should be upgraded.

3. The SSC Board should revamp their policies.

E.g.: passing of all kids right up to Std. VIII, the baseline tests which seem pretty baseless, etc.

(Roy Randall, teacher)



1. The SSC curriculum should be upgraded for better results.

2. First preference should be given to the SSC students for admission into junior colleges.

(Ishika Chintal, student)



1. Change the question paper format (map it to other boards).

2. Decrease the number of students per class (make a provision to increase the number of schools in every locality).

3. Privatised all schools. Then the management will work for better results.

4. Set up a (independent) committee that will rank the schools on their performance, results, management, etc. The committee should honour the schools' efforts.

(Shashi Boricha, teacher)

1. We should have half-day school so we can manage timings with our classes and have less stress.

2. Teachers shouldn't pressure the students to study too hard for SSC Boards.

3. Assignments and projects should be cancelled.

(Mustansir Murtuza Lokhandwala, student)



1. Practical exams should be more elaborate, testing their knowledge based on their observations.

2. Exam toppers should conduct workshops on paper writing and presentation so that the next batch of students is well-guided and motivated.

(Audrey Miranda, teacher)

Let us hope that the EduFOCUS Genie conveys our wishes to the concerned authorities and concrete measures are taken to improve our education system so that students enjoy the entire journey of learning and do not consider it a sheer burden.

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National Education Policy 2019 ...

Whither to???

— Dr. (Fr.) Francis Carvalho

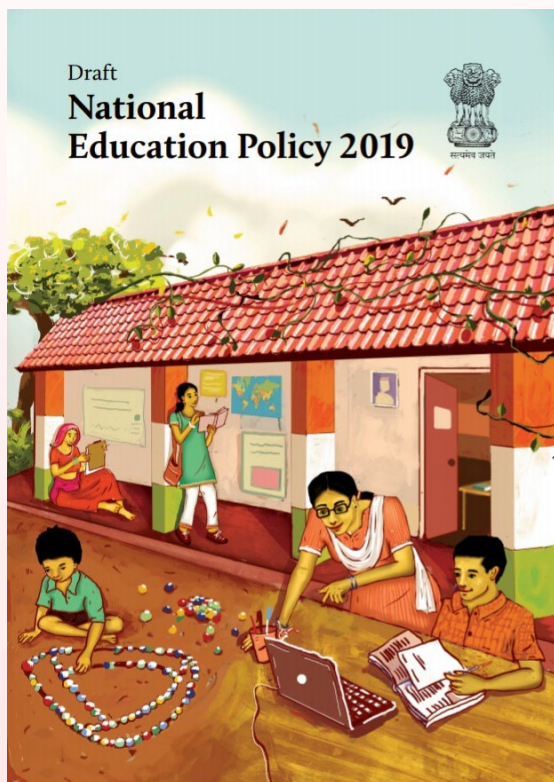
“access”, “equality”, “quality”, “affordability” and “accountability” sounded great to them though they did not seem to understand how these would be achieved by the Policy.

A careful reading of the draft NEP 2019, including the message of the ex-HRD minister, will raise a number of serious questions depending on your background; be it educational, philosophical, psychological, sociological, legal or any other. Being a school administrator and teacher for a number of years, with a stint at teacher education, including invitations to the Staff Training College of the University, I would restrict myself to just the student and teacher aspects.

I would begin with what could be considered progressive in the NEP. Its vision has good long-term goals attempting to achieve uniformity in the school education system by restructuring of the school administration with the creation of public school complexes and revision of curriculum. It recognises and emphasises the need to strengthen the foundation for the 3 R's namely: Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic right from the base. But do we want this type of uniformity in our students?

What also makes me wonder are some of the proposals, viz. references, which are made to ancient Indian scientists and mathematicians but, alas, no mention of the modern Indians who have won Nobel prizes and other international awards and acclamations in the last 50 years. Today, there are many of our countrymen who have passed through the portals of our Christian minority institutions, whose contribution to education and research have been recognised internationally, and are now not just head of departments but also of universities and multinational companies. What implications does this have? Isn't it true a prophet is not accepted in his own country?

In the proposed NEP 2019, the whole education system has been re-structured with changes in nomenclatures. The NEP begins formal education



The Union cabinet ministers were sworn in on the 31st May, 2019 and the very next day the new Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) presented the draft National Education Policy 2019 (NEP) giving the public just 30 days to send in their reactions/ suggestions to the Ministry. This just points to the haste with which the new government wishes to implement its National Education Policy, altered and quite different from the draft Education Policy 2016 which was sent back to the committee with a large number of changes to be made.

I asked a number of parents what they knew and thought of the draft NEP 2019. The general response was it was a good one. It was heartening to them because they felt that once a child was admitted to the nursery in a school, one need not bother till after Std. XII as all of schooling is slated to be completed in the same school. Words like

at the tender age of 3 years with the first 5 years of education (nursery, age 3 years, to end of grade 2, age 8 years) being called the “Foundation Stage”. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that Primary education should be made compulsory, is the Government making Pre-primary education formal and compulsory for 3 and 4-year olds and depriving them of spending their early years with their families? What happens to that age-old bonding and growing within the love and care of one’s family, imbibing its unique culture? Does this smack of indoctrination of vulnerable young minds? Further, examining the Pre-school stage in the major countries in the world, universally all of them refer to the Nursery and the Kindergarten as the Pre-school stage. Would the new nomenclature be in keeping with universal education understanding?

Further, we see changes in the names of other stages: 3 years of the Preparatory (or Latter Primary) Stage – grades 3 – 5, 3 years of the Middle (or Upper Primary) Stage – grades 6 – 8 and 4 years of the High (or Secondary) Stage – grades 9 – 12. One could ask on what basis has this re-grouping been done and does it align with international standards?

With the proposed introduction of school complexes and the change of status of private government-aided schools to public schools with the compulsory sharing of resources, couldn’t this result in the lowering of the standard of established private schools which could be deprived of fully utilizing their own resources as and when they need it?

It is true children pick up languages at an early age but won’t formal education with the 3-language policy confuse the child with similarities in script and differences in sentence construction?

The NEP 2019 envisages a standardized curriculum across all boards with the different boards having only assessment rights. Variation or different curricula enhances quality. What about the differently gifted? Does one size not fit all? Howard Gardner speaks of multiple intelligences in children, some of which are more dominant than others and have to be honed.

The emphasis on teaching in the home language will deprive the children of being global.

With the present and proposed system of appointment of teachers, many qualified and efficient teachers will be dissuaded from this profession. Consider this: to get admission to a teacher training college, be it for any level, one has first to pass a Common Entrance Test after which one can get admission to a teacher training college. Successfully completing the course, which consists of theory and practicals, and obtaining a recognition with a degree conferred by a national or even an internationally-recognised university does not guarantee one a teaching job because one has to clear a Teacher Eligibility Test which is theoretical and which will have a very low passing percentage. Does failure to clear the TET make one ineligible for a placement and discredit the university degree making the whole procedure of teacher training an exercise in futility and waste of precious time and finances?

Sadly, the NEP 2019 makes no mention of the great contribution of the minority Christian community towards education in this country. Besides, the proposed school complex system does not acknowledge the contribution of private minority trusts which put in their own investments and began schools to aid the Government in providing education to the minorities and the underprivileged which could, at one time, not be attended to by the Government. Governments of the past have acknowledged their contribution to education by providing grant-in-aid. These schools are now called “public” by a new policy.

With the stroke of a pen the future of our children in the country could change. Rise India thy millions save!



Dr. (Fr.) Francis Carvalho is currently Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Goregaon and Manager and Trustee of St. Thomas Academy, Goregaon. He has spent 24 years as Principal of various schools across Mumbai. He is currently also a member of the ABE Executive Committee.

The Draft National Education Policy 2019 - A Tsunami Waiting to Hit?

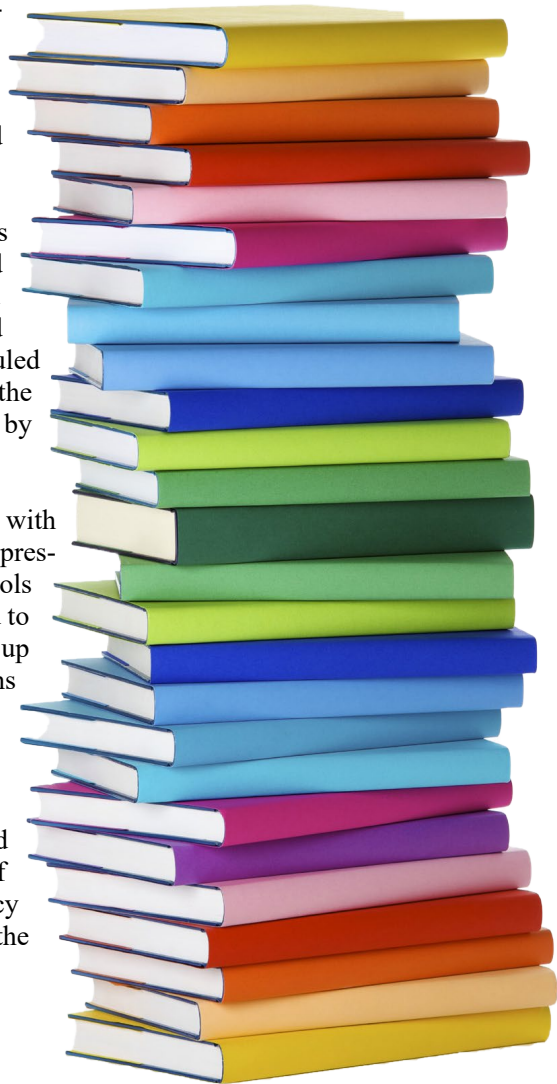
— Dr. (Fr.) Frazer Mascarenhas SJ

A studied reading of the draft National Education Policy 2019 will make one understand that the provisions will have a profound effect on the country in the years ahead. Christian-managed education, in particular, is likely to be hit by a tsunami if changes are not made in the draft to accommodate and encourage the excellence already achieved over many decades, in fact, over a century and more!

It cannot be denied that education in India requires major changes to meet the global needs of our world. Yet, it has been acknowledged that it is Christian-run educational institutions that have produced excellence; evidence of this is in the alumni of these institutions who have been honoured by the country with Padma and other awards and who have attributed much of their achievement to their early education. Despite this, the Government did not think it fit to include any Christian educationist in the Drafting Committee. Was this experience of educational excellence deliberately excluded for ideological reasons? A logical question! I feel a responsibility to point this out, since I am privileged to find my name in the document itself as one of the “eminent persons” consulted. Alumni of Christian institutions and other well-wishers could consider the following:

1. The policy does not make any mention of minority rights in educational institutions. These rights are for linguistic and religious minorities and affect some of the most renowned schools and colleges in the country. These rights are based on the Constitution of India and the Supreme Court has ruled in a constitutional bench judgement that they are part of the basic character of the Constitution and cannot be changed by Parliament.
2. The draft NEP has a provision for a school complex with a management committee which is independent of the present school management in aided privately-managed schools (declared as public schools by the draft NEP). This could lead to the excellent infrastructure and tradition that have been built up over many decades now being controlled by external persons who have little experience of managing education. Are the trustees of these schools not to have any control over their own schools?

This warrants a tsunami of protests from all those concerned about good education especially our alumni and parents of present students. The need to raise our voices in a democracy has been upheld by all governments past and present and is the way democracy is meant to function.



This is all the more urgent when considering other aspects of the draft NEP:

- i. The restructuring of the educational system to bring in the 3 years of the Pre-primary, including children from the age of 3 years, into the formal system does not seem advisable. Formal schooling across the world begins from the age of 6. Our ‘anganwadis’ desperately need better infrastructure and “strengthening”, which is the word used in the draft policy. However, the formal school set-up is not appropriate for play groups and nurseries.
- ii. The common curriculum and syllabus prescribed for both, rural and urban settings, for all types of schools will lead to a destruction of diversity in content. Social conditions require a variety of choices. Trying to maintain quality should not mean a standardization of content which will cripple quality.
- iii. The requirement of a TET for schoolteachers and SET/NET for College teachers shows a complete lack of confidence in the qualifying degrees of these applicants. If these are persisted with, as this draft proposes, good teachers will be driven away to other fields, leading to a grave loss to education of young aspirants who have proved their mettle in securing their degrees.
- iv. The National Policy, very surprisingly, admits that only 2.7% of the GDP is being spent on education (down from the earlier 4%). It acknowledges that 6% is needed. Yet many provisions in this Policy seem to indicate that privatization of education is the real intent of the Government given the trends of the last several years. For instance, teacher education will soon be entirely privatized, with only the 4-year self-financed courses being available. We call on this Policy to pledge a time-bound investment in public education to reach 6% of GDP in a maximum of 5 years especially if such a drastic restructuring is being envisaged.
- v. The 4-year Teacher Training Course, or B.Ed. Degree, will require a Std. XII student to already decide on teaching as a career at such a young age, without having a chance to explore the multiple fields available, although the Policy itself decries, “too much specialization and streaming of students into disciplines”.
- vi. It is incomprehensible that the Aadhar number is sought to be mandated to “validate employment records of teachers and credits earned by learners”, as this goes against the Supreme Court ruling on the use of the Aadhar.
- vii. There are provisions to bring in resource persons from the locality. Would these persons be brought in without any educational and teaching qualifications? An ideological bias could very easily be introduced through such persons, especially when unscientific claims are being made about “ancient” knowledge.
- viii. Finally, the draft does not effectively address the need for encouraging critical thinking and creativity in our students – so much needed today. For instance, an emphasis on quantitative assessment of students will be counter-productive.

A review of the draft National Education Policy 2019 is urgently needed to avoid the possibility of a massive tsunami of dislocation if these provisions are to take effect.

Dr. (Fr.) Frazer Mascarenhas SJ has a doctorate in Sociology and has been a teacher and administrator in higher education for nearly 27 years. After his retirement from St. Xavier’s College, he has been involved in the non-formal education of slum children and school education. He is currently Parish Priest at St. Peter Church, Bandra and Manager, St. Stanislaus High School, Bandra.

JoyFuellers 2019 – Understanding the Occupational Therapy Module

— Dr. Payal Ubale

“School is not the end; it is rather the instrumental means for improving our way of life,” said Don Bosco, endorsing his belief on the impact of schools in the future of every child. It was this vision that made him devote his life to the betterment of the educational system. Prafulta, a Don Bosco establishment, shares in this great vision and, for the last 20 years, has been promoting the enhancement of an all-round education in schools.

Our endeavour is to make education a happy and meaningful journey; especially for children who find learning difficult. We often find children who dread attending school. They dislike writing, they are inattentive and always “on the go”. Sometimes we find them unduly aggressive or destructive and at other times they are submissive or passive. For all such children, school becomes a difficult and traumatic journey and may affect them adversely for the rest of their lives.

However, the right intervention by teachers can help these children in a great way. With regard to school, we have observed some of the following:

1. Children get admission in schools based on their chronological age and they continue getting promoted to subsequent standards irrespective of the knowledge gained in the existing classes.
2. Academic performance is dependent on good cognitive-perceptual skills. Every class has a few children who are unable to perform well despite having an average or above average intelligence. These children have difficulty in accurately processing sensory information.



3. Sensory processing is a neurological process and is at its peak during early childhood. The brain in some children is wired differently resulting in Sensory Processing Dysfunction. When sensory processing deficits are effectively treated before the age of 7-8 years, the results achieved are significant.

Keeping this in mind, the ABE organises a 6-day programme called JoyFuellers for Pre-primary



teachers. So far, 160 teachers across 36 schools have attended this training programme. The Occupational Therapy (OT) Module creates awareness and imparts knowledge about learning difficulties in children and what teachers can do to help them.



The learning objectives of the OT module are:

1. Understanding normal development in the age group of 3-6 years.
2. Understanding sensory processing and its impact on learning and behaviour.
3. In-depth training of cognitive perceptual skills and how its deficit impacts learning.
4. Learning to make perceptual worksheets and how worksheets should be made according to the developmental level of each child.
5. Learning movement games and activities for fun to be done in class for better sensory and motor development of children.
6. Handwriting – the ‘get it write’ programme.

The Occupational Therapy Module of this training was conducted over 3 days in April 2019 with a follow-up session in June to revise the matter. Teachers were also trained in understanding the Mental Health Referral System. They were

informed about the various mental health professionals, their roles and the many prominent centres across Mumbai working to aid students.

The teachers were also guided to make a screening checklist that would help them identify children with traits of Sensory Processing Disorder and Learning Difficulties. This early detection at the Pre-primary level helps in prevention of severe learning deficits in later stages.

The training programme seemed to be very effective. Teachers eagerly picked up the many skills being taught. For many Pre-primary teachers it was the first in-service training they were attending. They showed interest in making creative worksheets and enthusiastically learned the various movements and games that would help children in the integration of their senses. It was a joy to notice that, on the revision day, the teachers were able to recall most of the concepts they had learned two months earlier! Thanks to the initiative of the ABE and the dedication of Prafulta, hundreds of children will reap the benefit of this training. Such trainings are necessary on a regular basis for all Pre-primary and Primary teachers to help make the learning journey easy and joyful for our children.



Dr. Payal Ubale has completed a master's degree in Occupational Therapy (Neuroscience) from Seth G.S. Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai. Associated with Prafulta for the last 6 years, her work involves assessment and treatment of children with different developmental and neurological issues. She heads a team of 10 therapists and supervises their work at Prafulta, Andheri, and at various schools in the city.

Summer Courses that Made You(th) AWESUMMER!

— Anjali Heredia Gracias



2019, being the Year of the Youth, St. Andrew's College, Bandra, in collaboration with Diocesan Youth Centre (DYC) and St. Paul's Institute of Communication Education, Bandra (SPICE), organised Awesummer 2019 for youth in the Archdiocese of Bombay. Conceptualised by Fr. Magi Murzello (Rector, St. Andrew's College), this unique programme offered the youth an opportunity to discover hidden facets of their personality and enhance their skill sets. Held across multiple Bandra venues, the courses ranged from the fun Social Ballroom Dancing and Baking to the creative Graphic Design and World of Poetry to the off-beat Mystery Writing and Handwriting Analysis to the essential Personality Development and Better Communication. There was also a workshop on the Gospel according to Luke. Kept to a duration of either 10 or 20 hours, each course's content was designed to give the youth a fair idea of the subject without boring them with an excess of information. The courses were open to youth of all faiths.

The core team encountered an ally in Bishop Barthol Barretto (In-charge of Youth Ministry) who immediately galvanised his army of SCC Co-ordinators to take this programme to the youth in their respective parishes. Deacon Ivan Fernandes reached out to yet more youth via Careers Hangout and the Quo Vadis retreats. The team then sat back with bated breath hoping the youth would

show some degree of interest in this opportunity for self-improvement. They definitely did not anticipate the enthusiasm and go-getter attitude that the youngsters would display. An incessantly ringing phone, a queue at the registration desk as parents and youth patiently awaited their turn, pleas to faculty to "organise just one more batch, please!" or "take this last student only", the regret of the Awesummer Co-ordinator as she turned yet another student away from a "house full" course – all became hallmarks in the lives of the team members. Dr. (Fr.) Dominic D'Silva SSP (Director, SPICE) and Dr. Omkar Bhatkar (Head, St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts) did their best to accommodate as many students as possible.

This contagion even infected the faculty members who thought nothing of walking the extra mile for their enthusiastic and grateful students. 2-hour long classes ran to 2.5 hours as parents worried over their ward's whereabouts. But the scolding would die on their lips when they'd see their child's happy face. Feedback forms were filled with comments of "Sir Eric/ Sir Abhishek/ Cordelia is just the best!!", "Marie Ma'am/ Saniv Sir/ Inez Ma'am patiently answered all our queries", "Chef Allan/ Christine Ma'am taught us little tricks to remember our stuff" and "They made us realise just how simple dance/ graphic design/ baking is".



(L-R): Fr. Magi Murzello, Fr. Saturnino Almeida SFX, Dr. (Fr.) Keith D'Souza SJ, Bp. Barthol Barretto, Fr. Godfrey D'Souza, Dr. (Fr.) Dominic D'Silva SSP



Awesummer core team (L-R): Anjali Heredia Gracias, Fr. Magi Murzello, Dr. Omkar Bhatkar, Bp. Barthol Barretto, Dr. (Fr.) Dominic D'Silva SSP, Sarita Manchanda, Deacon Ivan Fernandes

Here's looking forward to many more Awesummers for the youth in Mumbai!

The 17 Awesummer 2019 courses touched the minds and hearts of 350 youth across the city. This was evident at the graduation ceremony held on 30th May, 2019 at St. Andrew's High School grounds, Bandra and presided over by Bishop Barthol Barretto. The gratitude, respect and admiration of the youth for their teachers was plain to see as they huddled around them to talk and click photographs. Invitees to the evening's ceremony included Fr. Saturnino Almeida SFX (Managing Director, Fr. Agnel Technical Education Complex, Vashi), Fr. Godfrey D'Souza SDB (Provincial of the Salesian Province of Mumbai), Fr. Colbert da Silva SDB (Director, Don Bosco Institute of Technology, Kurla), Dr. (Fr.) Keith D'Souza SJ (Rector, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai), Fr. Luke Rodrigues SJ (Socius to the Provincial) and Fr. Alphonso Elengikal SSP (Editor, The Teenager Today). Ably assisted by the Women's Cell of St. Andrew's parish, Bandra, the core team brought the successful Awesummer 2019 to a close.

While the graduates of the pioneering batch continue bonding through their respective Whatsapp groups, plans for Awesummer 2020 are already underway. The challenge now is to reach out to many more youth across the city. This entails bringing a few more institutions on board so that youth do not have to travel to Bandra to avail of these courses. It would also allow students access to a wider range of facilities and courses.



Baking



Basics of Photography

Better Communication



Mystery Writing



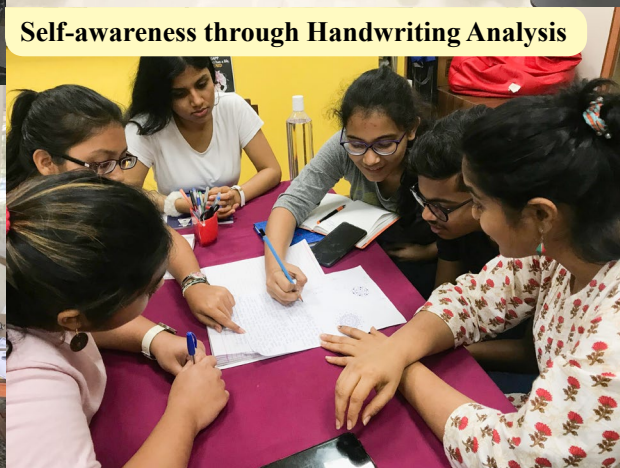
Electronic Music Production



Personality Development



Self-awareness through Handwriting Analysis



French



Social Ballroom



Graphic Design



The Extra Edge – A Personality Enhancement Workshop



Write Your Own Play



Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership Development Programme



The World of Poetry



Jazz Funk Dance



Workshop in Voice



Speech and Drama



Fr. Ashwin Castellino: Always Fervent in Serving the Lord

— Anjali Heredia Gracias



Listening to confident and persuasive, yet gentle, Fr. Ashwin Castellino speak, one would think he was a born orator; until he starts talking about his childhood. The youngest of 4 siblings (2 sisters and 2 brothers), Fr. Ashwin says he was “the most bullied and the most pampered in the house”. Pampered by his parents and bullied by his siblings, he believes they had a good childhood because they had so much of open space. He recalls, “We had a cottage on Chapel Road and no buildings around us. We had a garden with coconut trees around and I would play ‘Mass Mass’ with my friends where I would end up being the priest.” That would have likely been the seed of his vocation as his parents nurtured their children’s faith with daily Rosary and regular attendance at Sunday Mass.

However, Ashwin was a painfully shy child. “I refused to open my mouth during the interview at St. Stanislaus. They asked me the simplest things but I refused to speak. As a result, I did not get through,” he says. Despite the 8-year age gap between Ashwin and his older brother, his parents decided to send him to St. Andrew’s High School where his older brother was already studying as it would be less stressful for the reticent child.

Despite the shyness, Fr. Ashwin says, “school was fun”. Good at academics, he would win prizes every year. Geography and English were his favourite subjects; Geography because it was practical and did not require rote-learning. He enjoyed English, especially letter-writing, more so because he had good handwriting. Hindi and Marathi were the dreaded subjects.

Extra-curricular activities, however, were torturous for him. With bad stage-fright, elocution competitions were an ordeal. He recalls one particularly bad episode. “I was in Std. VIII and we had to recite essays; not poems. I remembered the entire passage before the competition. However, on stage, looking at the students in front of me, I was overcome with fright. I recited the first line and stopped. I had forgotten the entire passage. My knees were knocking and I was so embarrassed. I could see everyone in front of me laughing. I made up my



mind to never take part again.” Sports, too, were too much for the shy child to handle but he would gladly play the keyboard when required. Music interested him and this interest stood him in good stead later on.

He recalls a few teachers who encouraged and motivated him and took an interest in him especially after his mother passed on while he was in Std. IX. “Tr. Theresa and Tr. Zelia Almeida really cared about me. They would keep an eye on me especially after my mum passed on. They still keep in touch and even attended my ordination.”

St. Andrew’s College felt like a natural jump to him. Not only did both of his sisters attend this college but most of his friends planned to go there too. Choosing the Arts stream, Ashwin majored in Sociology. To him, college signified freedom. The authorities were not strict about attendance. Doing his best to overcome his shyness, he managed to make a few new friends. They would skip class to hang around outside, play snooker at the nearby Temptations pub or even take up part-time call centre jobs; not that they needed the money but the extra Rs. 7000 – 8000 a month was always welcome additional pocket money.

The turning point in his life was when he had a “God experience” in the first year of degree college. He remembers, “I was praying before the Blessed Sacrament at a prayer meeting in Powai when the leader said – Open your hearts to the Holy Spirit. I would have done it several times before but this time it was different. I felt so loved by God. It did not happen overnight but I could see myself change gradually. All my inferiority and fear started going away. I began to grow in my relationship with God.”

This experience led to Ashwin joining the prayer group at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. The shy person who could not speak vanished. Encouraged to take part in ministry, Ashwin started off with music ministry followed by praise and worship and teaching. He affirms, “I tell people that all that I am today is because of the Lord. Everything is in His time. He is now using me as His instrument to reach out to others.”



Despite his experiences with the prayer group, Ashwin felt the pull of the material world. He recalls, “When I was in the SYBA, I planned to work full-time at a call centre during the holidays and quit once the next academic year started. But since I was doing so well, I wanted to continue working and planned to complete my graduation through correspondence.” His always-supportive father gave him the freedom to choose between work and college. While his office colleagues insisted a degree through correspondence was the way to go, his prayer group friends encouraged him to complete his degree through the College. When the lure of money won out, he collected the forms from the University and made his way back to St. Andrew’s College to collect a leaving certificate in September of the academic year. Still assailed by doubt, he made a pit-stop at the College chapel to ask the Lord to guide him. And the Lord did not disappoint. Ashwin, instead of asking for a leaving certificate, heard himself ask the Principal if he could re-join college. Not only was he shocked but the Principal was too. After much back-and-forth between the College authorities, he was allowed to re-join despite having missed the first 4 months of the academic year. Failing all his papers in the preliminary examination, Ashwin decided his only course of action was to work hard and pray, “Lord, if you have brought me to this, you had better take me through this.” Not only did he pass the examination but he topped the College in the Sociology stream. Not only did he win 3 scholarships from the College but was also asked to teach. He could

clearly see God's hand in all this.

Post-college, Ashwin joined HSBC in the credit cards division. Despite much success, there was an underlying restlessness. He felt his life had a greater purpose. He began to think about his vocation. "It was probably that seed from my childhood which was suppressed... me playing 'Mass Mass'. This thought, of giving up everything and surrendering to the Lord knowing He would use me, appealed to me. I could see lives being touched through me in the prayer group. How much more could He do with my life if I dedicated my entire life to Him."

The discernment process was a long one; involving many respected elders and spiritual directors. The most crucial advice he received was to spend time in personal prayer. Praying before the Blessed Sacrament, the image of himself as a priest brought him far more joy than that of a married person. As a priest, the image was that of a person reaching out to people to save them with one hand while the other hand clung to the Cross. These were nameless faceless people but they were crying out for help. This image would stay with him and become especially poignant during his Regency year in Korlai.

Korlai is a purely Marathi-speaking community with around 200 Catholic families. Alcoholism is rampant as the residents distil liquor at home. They even mix in battery acid to make the concoction more potent. Despite being regular Sunday Mass-goers, Br. Ashwin felt that their lives were bereft of God's presence. What they really needed was the "God experience". Thus, a charismatic prayer group was started. The Ashwin who earlier would wriggle out of learning Marathi was now leading praise and worship in the language. But, the visible change in the villagers' lives kept him going. Some stopped distilling alcohol while others gave up drinking altogether. The group even started going to Potta for retreats every 6 months.

One particular incident stays with him till date – that of a young man caught up in alcoholism. Every Sunday, Br. Ashwin would go to his home to try to convince him to attend Mass, without any success. He would manage to give him the slip. 3

months in, he surprised Br. Ashwin when he showed up in church. With tears in his eyes, the young man confessed that he had been rejected by his family and society. He had lost all respect. He continued, "I realised God has not rejected me. He has sent you to reach out to me." When he said this, Br. Ashwin's mind went back to the image of him reaching out to people. He understood how God was using him. From that time on, the young man regularly attended Sunday Mass till his death from alcoholism a year later.

Discerning that the priesthood was where his vocation lay, the next decision was between the diocesan priests and a religious order. Ruling out the Redemptorists and the Jesuits, Ashwin decided to visit the Missionaries of Charity Fathers (MCF) in Kolkata. Despite enjoying the work, there was still an emptiness and restlessness. So, this one was ruled out too. On a retreat to Potta, he encountered Fr. Ken Barker, Founder of Missionaries of God's Love (MGL), an Australian congregation working with addicts and youth. Visiting them in Australia, Ashwin found that this experience too left him empty and restless and he began to doubt his vocation.

Taking this conundrum back to Fr. Roland Fialho (Vocations Promoter, St. Pius X Seminary, Goregaon), he was assured that whatever he was doing right now was God's will for him. Fr. Roland suggested he not think too much about it but focus on work and prayer group ministry. 1st October, 2010, whilst in the Prayer Room at Mount Carmel Church, he put down the pros and cons of diocesan vs. religious orders despite a mental block against



the diocesan priesthood. But still no clarity. Finally, he opened the Bible and his eyes fell on a verse by Isaiah: 'I will teach you where to go and I will show you the path'. That consoled him despite no clear answers still. The next day, he awoke with a singular thought – Ashwin, you are called to be a diocesan priest. He recounts, "All the negativity and prejudice against diocesan priests just vanished and I was filled with so much peace and joy... a joy that was so hard to contain. But after so much searching, I thought this might be a feeling that would go away in due course. However, 6 months later, the joy and peace had only increased." When he narrated this to Fr. Roland, the only reply he got was, "What more can you ask for? The Lord is calling you."

Ashwin joined the Seminary in June 2011 after more than 5 years of discernment. Seminary life proved to be very different. Here, he was participating in everything – singing, dancing, speaking, acting. After his Regency at Korlai, the moderators identified a unique quality in Br. Ashwin – he could bring to life any group or body that was dead; be it the youth or the Small Christian Communities

(SCCs) or altar servers or the choir. Thus, he was designated to Marriage Counselling and completed a master's degree in Sociology as well as a master's degree in Counselling while still a seminarian.

Currently, appointed to St. Michael Church, Mahim, he also assists at Snehalya. He loves interacting with people and enjoys counselling; it comes naturally to him. He loves to read and listen to music in his free time or head out to Shivaji Park to exercise. It has barely been a month since his ordination, so being called "Fr. Ashwin" still sounds a bit odd to his ears. It hasn't sunk in yet.

His message is for the youth but it may well apply to everyone. "Be passionate about whatever you do. Passion and zeal have brought me here which is why my motto is from Romans 12:11 – 'Never flag in zeal but always be fervent in serving the Lord.' If you have passion, you will be motivated to do your best. There will always be doubts and fears arising but passion will keep you going despite the challenges and failures."



Fr. Omar Fernandes: Defender of the Faith

— Anjali Heredia
Gracias



Don't be surprised if you see the long-haired bearded Fr. Omar Fernandes enjoying a game of football at muddy Supari Talao during the monsoons. Professional football's loss has been the Catholic church's gain. The former defender for Companeroes SC and Kingfisher Airlines is now a priest of the Archdiocese of Bombay. That may be hard to believe for some until you see him celebrate Mass, at ease on the altar, his youthful sneakers visible below his vestments.

Fr. Omar grew up in Bandra with an identical twin brother, Ogden, and Oswald, 2 years older. He recalls his school days warmly; not just the bond shared with his friends but also the love and

affection he received from his teachers. "I studied in St. Aloysius High School, Bandra. They made people of all faiths feel welcome. There were never separate programmes for us as Catholics or because the others were Hindu or Muslim. Even among the Catholics, there was no concept of Goan or East Indian or Mangalorean. Caste or creed did not matter. Till today, my best friend is a Muslim. We had wonderful teachers like Tr. Vivian, Tr. Beatrice and Tr. Regina. We also had Tr. Felicia D'Mello in charge of the choir. I was quiet in school; not wanting to get out of my comfort zone. But when she heard me sing, she insisted I join. As a result, my twin and I joined Celeste Cordo's Gleehive for 2 years, taking part in musicals and shows. We would also take part in Dramatics in school."

While their mother would not allow them to participate in team sports lest they lose focus on their studies, they would compulsorily have to participate in the School's annual sports day and fared decently at the 100 and 200-meter races.

Of his studies, Fr. Omar says, "I was no scholar in school but I enjoyed Science and Maths... Maths more than anything else as I loved solving Maths problems. I like the practical, hands-on part of Science, namely, the experiments in the laboratory." Despite his love of Maths, he chose to pursue





Arts at St. Andrew's College with plans to become a psychologist. However, he was deeply disappointed as there was a huge gap between expectation and reality. "What I thought was psychology was very different from what was taught in college. I was thinking Counselling but when I went through the textbooks, it talked about a lot of other things." Still, he continued with it and majored in Psychology and Sociology.

College was when football entered his life. Having never kicked a ball around, Omar learnt the ropes of the game in junior college. By senior college, he was playing for the college football team. While football was a big part of college life, he regrets not participating in other activities. "There was Olio, the College festival. Both, my twin and I, play the guitar and sing but we did not get involved. There was also dramatics but we stayed away from that too. I feel I had an inferiority complex. I was ok being an observer but not a participant." Faith, too, was not a big part of college life. He recalls, "We had friends who were part of the Charismatic Renewal. They would take the lead in organising Mass every first Friday as well

as other prayer services. We'd play the guitar only if they asked us, else we'd stay away."

By the time he finished college, he had offers to play football for various professional clubs. He joined a Bandra team called Companeroes SC and played for 3 years, winning every division till one below the National level. Whatever Omar may have lacked in faith, he made up for it with his value system. Even though he was not the best student and the boys were naughty at home, they matured as adults. Responsibilities and values that their mother instilled in them came to the front. Compromise was not acceptable. Recounts Fr.



Omar, “I played defense and I would see defenders who would pull down the other team’s forwards. I would not do it even when my friends egged me on. For all the years I played football, I was never carded – not even a yellow card. To reach the National level and not receive a card is significant.”

Kingfisher Airlines followed Companeroes and he joined them under the sports quota. There, he was in charge of flights and interacted a great deal with the contract staff. While others saw them as just loaders meant to do manual work, Omar saw their humanness. He recalls, “Imagine working in the heat of the sun without any shade; just a cap on. I would talk to them. They were all working hard to give their families a better future. They would ask me to fill forms for school admissions.” One day, he pitched in to help load cargo and encountered the wrath of an irate manager who did not want to see uniformed staff doing menial work. An argument followed which ended in Omar getting slapped with a memo.

Another time, on a night shift, there was a mix-up with cargo being loaded onto wrong flights. Catching the error in time, he contacted the same manager and handled the situation with great aplomb. Having apologised for his behaviour, the manager informed Omar that he was due for a promotion to supervisor with a huge pay jump. But this news did not bring him any joy despite having worked towards it for 3 years. Sharing these thoughts with his mother, she advised him to carry a pocket Bible to work to read in his free time. One night, he decided to add prayer to the Bible reading. He closed his eyes at 2am and, a few minutes later, was startled to find it was 5.30am. The Omar who would stand outside church during Sunday Mass, unaware of what was taking place on the altar, had just spent 3.5 hours in prayer and it had felt like a few minutes.

Given that he had no personal prayer life nor involvement in church activities, Fr. Savio D’Souza SFX, a family friend, advised him to get involved with church activities to see if he enjoyed it. He chose to help Fr. Savio at his parish of Our Lady of the Forsaken, Malwani, a very poor parish surrounded by slums. This joy of serving the poor filled the void in him and he began to seriously

consider the priesthood. Visiting the Seminary at Goregaon, its huge football ground made him heave a sigh of relief. One could hear seminarians practising on the guitar and some practising for their annual play. The beautiful and serene chapel appealed to him too. Surviving 8 years here seemed like a cakewalk even though sitting still in one place was a challenge to him.

Still, a doubting Omar asked God for 3 signs and received them. The first was a blood donation request. Oswald, a regular blood donor, was not home and so, Omar decided he would go – his first time donating blood. After the donation, he found himself chatting with Fr. Vincent Vaz CSSR, the patient’s brother and the Provincial of the Redemptorists. Fr. Vincent was also a former Chapel Road resident. The second sign was while playing football at St. Stanislaus’ school grounds. Knocked unconscious during a header, he regained consciousness 2 minutes later to find a concerned Fr. Francis Juan SJ standing over him with his rosary in his hand. Laughs Fr. Omar, “You’d normally only see this sight if you awoke in your grave. I could not ignore this sign.” The third sign took a few weeks to come. But, out of the blue, one evening, his mother turned to him while they were watching TV and asked if he wanted to become a priest. Taken aback, Omar said no. But later, shared with her the signs.

June 2011 saw Omar joining the diocesan seminary. He recalls his first day there, “After everyone had left, I had a deep sense of sadness... as if I would not see my family or my friends again. But the next morning, I woke up with a deep sense of peace and I knew that God was with me from that moment. Nothing would make me waver from the fact that this was my vocation.” His decision to join the Seminary encountered mixed reactions. While his mother and older brother were not surprised, his twin took time to accept his decision. His friends too were taken aback but, over the course of the years, accepted his decision.

The decision to join the diocese as against a religious order was fairly easy. Recounts Fr. Omar, “Most orders, like the Jesuits and the Salesians, have education as their main portfolio and it was not something I was inclined towards. In the

diocesan priesthood, you can discover your vocation with the vocation. You can realise your true potential. I spent my Regency at Our Lady's Home, Parel and I was in charge of 120 boarders; mostly orphans. I was also a catechist on the weekends and I enjoyed it. I found I did not mind teaching. I also found that I liked scripture studies."

Joining the Seminary by no means meant giving up his love for football. "I played football every single day in the Seminary. We had games from 4pm to 5.30pm and if we had an exam at 5.30pm, I would show up in my football jersey." The seminarians are also encouraged to stay in touch with the family and friends. "After I joined the Seminary, I grew closer to some of my friends. At no point could my friends say that I was not available for them. I would even attend birthdays and weddings. The Seminary would always grant us permission. They encourage us to be a part of society rather than aloof."

His years in the Seminary also saw him change his look; from clean-shaven and short-haired to bearded and long-haired, from being mistaken for his identical twin to being mistaken for Jesus. "I look too similar to my twin. I grew a beard to look different but he copied me because it looked good. I realised the only way out was to grow my hair because he is in the corporate sector and he cannot do that."

Apart from football, the twins love riding. In fact, Ogden is famous in his own right with his own YouTube channel and a following of more than 142,000 where he rides bikes and reviews them for the likes of Yamaha, Harley-Davidson, etc. For Fr. Omar though, riding is a de-stressor. "For me, its more about

the ride. I enjoy the experience and the journey."

Ordained on 6th April, 2019, Fr. Omar is looking forward to his first posting as Assistant Parish Priest at St. Francis Xavier Church, Vile Parle where he would like to be actively involved in the youth ministry as well as the school.

His message is addressed to all teachers. "In school, if you told me that I would be so connected to my teachers, I would not have agreed. I'm in touch with them even today because of the way they formed me in my school years. My values come not only from my mother but also from my teachers. The words that my teachers spoke to me in the past are dear to me even today. What you say to a student can make or break them to a large extent. Even when I was wrong, the way I was corrected was significant and it stayed with me. Now, in the confessional, I tell people that if they are usual reactive, to pause for a moment before speaking. Whatever is said should be said out of love with the good of the other person in mind. If you keep that thought in mind, you will speak only beautiful things. And I think my teachers did that really well."



Fr. Omar with his mum, retired Principal Regina Rodricks and Tr. Beatrice D'Mello

Divine Intervention

— Verus Ferreira



He is a familiar face at many major music festivals in the country and has also made his presence felt abroad. A local boy from the JB Nagar slums in Andheri (Mumbai), Vivian Fernandes, who goes by his stage name Divine, has developed his own style of hip hop and is today regarded as one of the top rappers, songwriters and composers in the city. His award-winning 2013 release ‘Yeh Mera Bombay’ went viral, while his 2015 summer-smash ‘Mere Gully Mein’ was not only honoured as the ‘Best Video of 2015’ by Rolling Stone Magazine (India), but also established him as one of the premier hip hop acts in the country and the face of hip hop in India. In 2014, the 29-year old, who hails from a lower middle class orthodox Christian family, won the Radio City Freedom Awards for ‘Best Hip Hop/ Rap Artist’ and was also awarded ‘Best New Artist 2015’ by iTunes and Apple Music in India as one of the top 6 artists to watch out for in 2016 by the BBC Asian Network.

What’s more, there’s even Bollywood movie (‘Gully Boy’) based on his story and that of his other hip hop friend, Naezy. June this year, saw the release of the first-ever documentary on his life, ‘Gully Life: The Story of Divine’, that takes an

in-depth look at how a young rapper from Mumbai became one of the most sought-after musicians in India and a global superstar. The 55-minute film chronicles the ups and downs of one of India’s favourite rappers, in a journey that’s as fascinating as it is endearing.

Divine was a panelist at the recently-concluded Music Inc.’s 2-day conference on music where his film ‘Gully Life- The Story of Divine’ was screened for the first time. Post the screening, Verus Ferreira met up with Divine to know more about his journey as a singer, his personal life, his narratively powerful as well as technically brilliant videos and his plans for the future.

Not many know your life story, tell us about it?

I wanted to study sound engineering, but the fees, which were around Rs. 4 lakhs, were too much for my mom to afford. So, she bought me a computer worth Rs. 10,000 and a microphone and I started writing every day. The mic really helped me write and record. I started to understand how I could change the pitch. If you utilize the mic properly it’s a very beautiful tool. So, I never ever trained in music, I learned the techniques of audio software

and then went on to record and master my own songs. Then I realized that I could not record at home, so I found a studio that was very cheap – Rs. 300 an hour. I would collect money, go to the studio and make the song and just listen to it by myself. That helped me understand my song and lyrics. No one was there to guide or tell me. I know rappers who would count their syllables and write, I never did that.

What about school and college, were you a very proficient student?

(Laughs) No, I wasn't really good in school but I did my best to work hard in every subject. I studied at St. John the Evangelist High School in Marol and went to RD National College, Bandra. While in college, I was part of a hip hop group called Mumbai's Finest where I learnt rapping skills from a rapper named Ace.



How did you get into rapping and making music?

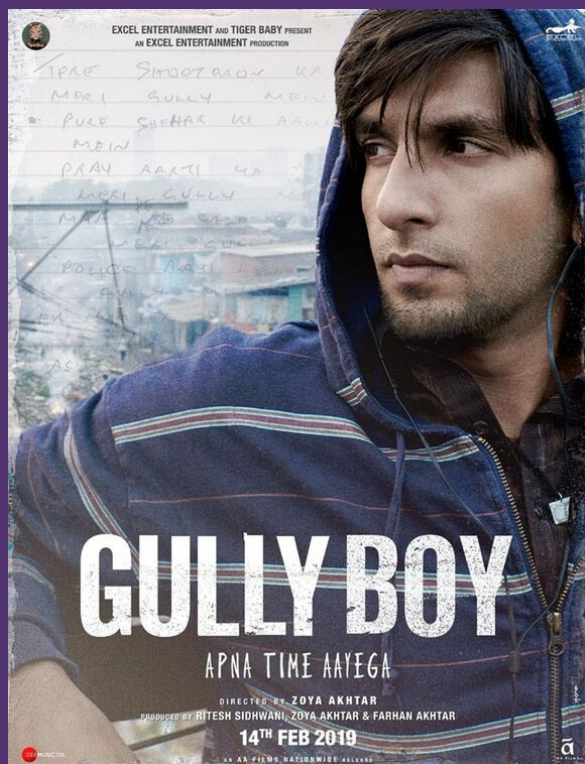
I started rapping in the second year of college but started listening to rap in the eighth grade. When I first heard rap, I found it very interesting that there were so many words in one song. When rappers used to say words very fast, it would really shock me. I used to go home and check the lyrics to see how they wrote. It surprised me that they would say so much in such a short time frame – 3 minutes and maybe 200 lines. That's what made me write.

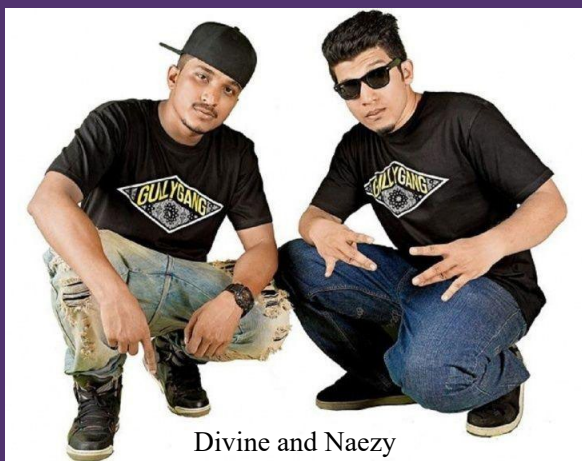
And you wrote in Hindi?

I didn't know I could do this in Hindi. No one helped me when I started out; rap was very nascent, no rappers around, no rap jams. Soon, people connected to my songs and that is when I started writing in Hindi. The first word I wrote was "gully". I wrote the verse, I showed it to my friends and they couldn't believe that I had written it. It became the first verse of the song 'Yeh Mera Bombay'. I got 1,00,000 views in 1 month releasing it by myself, shot the video with my friends on a basic camera. The second video came a year later – 'Mere Gully Mein' about my gully and now about me.

So the Internet helped you a lot.

Yes, I used to pick up the beats from the Internet and then I got in touch with my producer SEZ via Facebook. He helped me with my first original composition 'Yeh Mera Bombay' for which we won 2 awards. I went to Delhi to accept it and there I met him for the first time and we hit it off!





Divine and Naezy

So did you try to take a few learner lessons from what you saw?

I don't aspire to be like the typical commercial rappers, I want to stay true to myself; to learn constantly. I just don't want to make songs for fun. It's really me that I put into the song. My lyrics come from my heart and then I just pen it down. I don't lie as I can't lie to myself. Musically, I want to be very strong. Another song, 'Jungli Sher' is a mix of English and Hindi. My entire concept is to rap in Hinglish as everyone gets it; from rickshaw guys to hawkers, all understand basic English. It's a very autobiographical rap song.

You also shot a music video on an iPhone. Tell us something about it.

Vandana Kataria, a filmmaker, came up with the idea of shooting the video for 'Jungli Sher' on the iPhone 6s which blew us all. She was totally taken by my music and my lyrics and that helped her plan the entire look and feel of the video. I am extremely happy with the look of the video and, above all, Apple music for giving me a worldwide exclusive debut which is a first for an artist. This makes me feel lucky and I am humbled.

What is Gully Gang Entertainment all about? Is it a school to teach rap?

It's not a school. We cannot teach anyone how to rap. It's a platform that I always wanted to create for guys like me who want to do something with music. If you have good music out there, I'll surely know because I constantly keep looking for what is happening on the scene. Keep putting out your songs and I'll know and we can help you.

So what is the word Gully all about and what does it mean to you?

Gully is passion for me; gully is inspiration for me, and something very close to me. All this is what really inspired me. Whatever I could see around me, listen to and feel was the Gully. My vision is what I worked on and it's something you will always get something out of. Gully Boy is about Mumbai – the dream of someone who wants to make it big in this city; a city or place of hope.

Hip hop is known for a lot of slang. How is it that you come out clean in your songs?

Yes, because that's who I am and that's what I want to promote. There is no fun in hurling abuses in your songs. That's not my style.

Coming to your film 'Gully Boy', did you work on the songs in the film and did you play a part in it too?

Yes, there are 18 songs in a span of 45 minutes. I have sung a few songs, but Ranveer (Singh) has done most of it along with a host of other singers who are rappers themselves. There are other singers too in the film like Dub Sharma, Jasleen Royal and others. In fact, 3 songs 'Meri Gully Mein', 'Apna Time Aayega' and 'Asli Hip Hop', have hit the Radio Top 20 charts. There's 'Goriye' which is a mix of styles including rap, bhangra and pop. The last song, 'India 91', has a number of styles to it with a number of rappers singing or rapping in



Vivian Fernandes
with his mother

different languages, styles and forms, which make it a really interesting song. The movie is basically inspired by my life and that of Naezy and the music we make.

You also have a documentary on your life which was released recently. Would you like to comment on it?

I've had an incredible and amazing journey so far. It almost feels like a dream. To be able to do what I love and for it to be appreciated by others, I feel blessed. Hip hop really did save my life. Shooting this documentary was quite a journey to go back tracing all the steps in my life. It also revisits the places and people that shaped my life; from school-teachers to friends like family, my mother to artist managers. Akshat Gupta who has directed the film has done a great job.

Talking about your family, you had quite a difficult past while growing up. Would you like to share something?

It's all there in the film actually. When my father left the family, I was just 14 years old. My mother had no option but to take up a job in Qatar. So, she left me and my elder brother with my grandmother. It was a difficult life really. Soon, my brother too left for Qatar and so I led a really lonely life without anyone, but my friends.

Something that everyone is waiting to know is when will you be releasing an album?

I am releasing an album soon. It's been 8 years now and so I have around 20 – 25 tracks. I have access to all the best musicians and I really want to make an album that everyone will remember. The album name is Kohinoor.

Lastly, many would want to know as to why you

took a godly name like Divine.

When I first started writing, I would write gospel rap; something which is unique and has a very different style. My mother and I would go to the Marol church for Mass, and there I used to practice rap music. Also, He (the Almighty) has always given me strength, and the name DIVINE actually always makes me think that if I call myself DIVINE, then I must live up to it.

Quick fire with Divine:

Height: 5' 6"

Eye color: Dark Brown

Favorite Song: Changes by Tupac and Alright by Kendrick Lamar

Favorite Producers: Dr Dre, Pharrell Williams

Favorite Rappers: 50 Cent, Nas, Jay Z, Eminem

Do you have tattoos: I have two – one on my right forearm where I have a house and a tree, and on my right chest, I sport the wings of a bird

Favorite Food: Dal – rice

Do you love animals: I have a pit bull named Grumpee

Hobbies: Travelling, Gymming

Date of birth: 2nd October 1990

Zodiac sign: Libra

Do you have a girlfriend: No Comments



Verus Ferreira is a freelance journalist/ photojournalist/ author with more than 27 years of experience in entertainment journalism with the Indian media and has contributed to a variety of leading newspapers and magazines in Mumbai. He is the author of 'The Great Music Quiz Book' and 'The Great Rock Music Quiz Book'. He presently writes for The Teenager Today, Afternoon Despatch and Courier and is also the founder of the music portal, www.musicunplugged.in. He also has his own portal www.verusferreira.com.

The Journey from “Namaste” to “Herzlich Willkommen”— Patricia D’Sylva - Pires

This year, **Apostolic Carmel High School and Junior College, Bandra** in collaboration with **St. Stanislaus High School, Bandra** embarked on a new journey by organising an exchange programme with **Wilhelms-Gymnasium, Stuttgart, Germany**. A total of 10 students – 6 girls and 4 boys were selected from their respective schools.

The students were accompanied by the Principal of Apostolic Carmel, Sr. Suchitra Furtado AC, and 2 teachers, Tr. Cinderella D’Mello from St. Stanislaus and Tr. Patricia D’Sylva – Pires of Apostolic Carmel. We all felt really fortunate and privileged to be included in this extremely exciting new experience.

We were in Germany from 3rd May to 13th May, 2019. The 11 days spent there provided us with a fabulous opportunity to view the world through a different lens. We lived with the host families, which exposed us to their way of life, while we explored a different culture with its traditions,



customs, beliefs and a language which we were initially not familiar with but grew to love.

The students greatly benefited from this programme. Integration into another family totally different from their own, as well as development of lifelong friendships, fostered in them an appreciation of home and family. We witnessed in them self-development and awareness which led to enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem. What emerged very strongly was maturity and social poise fuelled by the necessity to confront challenges outside a familiar support network and comfort zone. It broadened their horizons and helped them develop a global perspective.

The pristine environment, the autobahn road system, the beautiful stone structures, home gardening and bee harvesting created a lasting impression. The health-conscious residents usually choose



organic food and their meals always include fresh leafy green salads. They also take great interest in the environment and abide by rules and regulations to ensure that pollution levels were kept minimal. This is something that we Indians should learn from them.

Exchange programmes allow international learning and knowledge. This propels students towards an understanding and acceptance of an array of different cultural and community perspectives. They develop analytical and problem-solving skills. They show an enhanced interest in global issues as well as a broader general knowledge. On completion of the trip, the students felt a great sense of accomplishment which has encouraged them to develop independent opinions, make well-thought-out decisions and they are now striving towards fresh goals.

I would like to conclude with a few inspirational words by Barrack Obama: “Simple exchanges can break down walls between us, for when people come together and speak to one another and share a common experience, then their common humanity is revealed. We are reminded that we are joined together by our pursuit of a life that’s productive and purposeful, and when that happens, mistrust begins to fade and our smaller differences no longer overshadow the things that we share. And that’s where progress begins.”



Discovering France

— Austine Vas

St. Mary's School (ICSE), Mazagaon organized a students' exchange programme with Lycée St. John Paul II, Rennes in France this summer. As part of this programme a group of 12 students and 1 teacher visited France from 29th April to 10th May, 2019. The student spent most of their time in Rennes where they stayed with families of the host school's students. They also spent a day in Paris before returning home to Mumbai.

In Rennes, the students had a wonderful time with their hosts; not just sight-seeing but also while attending classes and in cultural exchange. They were very fortunate to attend the UN conference on Sustainable Development that was taking place there. Their presence was well-recognised by allotting them special seating behind the UN officials.

It was very hard for the students to bid farewell to their hosts but they now look forward to welcoming the French students to India in November, 2019.



Student Exchange Programme With St. Xavier's School, Godavari, Nepal

— Austine Vas

Under 'Educate Magis', the umbrella organisation of Jesuit institutions across the world, **St. Mary's School (ICSE)** conducted an exchange programme with St. Xavier's School, Godavari, Nepal. It was their first ever such exchange programme. After much preparation and correspondence with each other's schools, the actual student exchange began with 25 students and 2 teachers of our school visiting the Nepal school from 30th October to 5th November, 2018. It was indeed a memorable experience to be cherished for life. The visit to Chandragiri Cable Car facility, a very close view of the snow-capped Himalayan ranges along the northern border of Nepal and, of course, Mount Everest, the highest peak on the earth were some of the high points of the trip. Apart from this, with a meticulously planned itinerary, the Principal and the management of our host school ensured that we visited every place of historic significance in and around Kathmandu. These included the Narayanhiti Palace, Patan Durbar Square, Swayambhu Stupa, Chhauni Museum, Kathmandu Durbar Square, Buddha Stupa, Pashupatinath Temple, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, the Army Museum and the nearby marble quarry.

However, the most memorable experiences were the manner in which we were welcomed at the School by the Principal, staff and students, the interaction with the students and our participation in the annual sports day of the school where we were successful in winning the much hyped Tug-o-War event against our host school students.

Our visit to Nepal was reciprocated with the visit of 25 students and 2 teachers from St. Xavier's School, Godavari to our school from 30th November to 7th December, 2018. There were various



surprises in store for the students on a daily basis; their 12-hour delayed arrival into Mumbai notwithstanding. On Day 1 itself, they were taken on a Mumbai Darshan where they visited every place of historic significance. They also visited the Byculla Zoo, the historic Gateway of India, Fashion Street, Phoenix Mall etc. The visitors were also fortunate to enjoy the Navy Day Programme organized at Gateway of India on 2nd December. There was also visits to Nehru Science Centre and the Nehru Planetarium where they were treated to the show 'Awesome Universe'.

Apart from all the learning experiences, the students also spent a fun-filled day at Water Kingdom, Borivali. On the second last day, they were taken to the Andheri Sports Complex where they enjoyed a football match between Mumbai City FC and Chennai FC. The students also participated in our sports day programme where they participated in few races and put up a team for Tug-o-War against the host school. However, the result was obvious – the Marians emerged victorious.

In conclusion, I would like to say that this exchange programme, which was a first for both schools, was truly a great learning experience with fond memories that will be cherished for a lifetime by every participant.



Crossing Borders

— Sunil Almeida

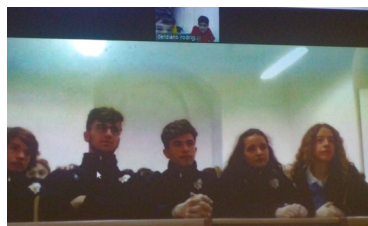
When one experiences a different culture through educational and cultural exchange, one gains a deeper understanding of oneself and those around us, deepening our knowledge of foreign and Indian cultures and strengthening relationships. To learn beyond the classroom and through experiences of people and gather knowledge through visits and interactions with students from different political and social background has been the core objective of the exchange programmes at **Campion School, Fort.**

Campion School has been deeply immersed with exchange programmes (both national and international) for the last 9 years. On the international platform, we have ongoing projects with schools from the Netherlands and Spain. These projects are centred on economics, value systems in our culture, religion, environment, cultural diversity and art.

The students through their research, online videoconferencing, visits to schools and staying with host families have greatly benefited in

understanding and appreciating different cultures and have grown to understand global issues from different perspectives. They have successfully arrived at consensuses on complex issues concerning environment and global trade.

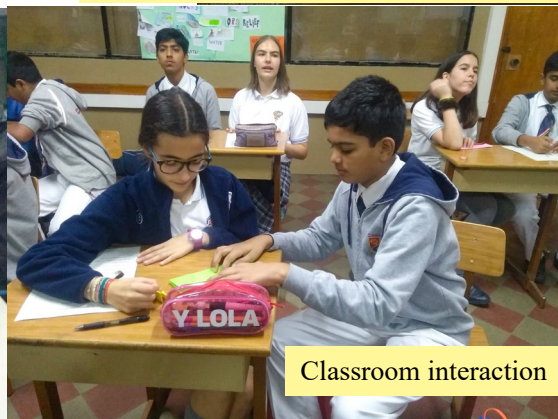
Campion has also involved itself, on a similar pattern, with schools within India and has also adopted a rural school in Talasari. This has allowed the students to gain an insight of true India. The exchange programmes have widened the horizon of the students and has brought them to a stage wherein they can appreciate and work together, despite differences, for a common cause and grow up to be responsible men.



Videoconferencing with the Netherlands



At Assam Valley School



Classroom interaction



Learning bamboo craft in Assam



Learning classical Spanish music

DBHS Matunga Students Grow with International Sports Exchange Programmes

— Ashwini Gupte



A formidable bastion of sport, **Don Bosco High School, Matunga** encourages students to step up their game through international training and experience. 3 of our students are currently benefitting from their sports coaching programmes abroad.

Sahil Jadhav of Std. VIII D is attending a cricket exchange programme with Wells Cathedral School, UK from 5th May 2019. This programme is in recognition of his talent in cricket. Sahil is being mentored in cricket, along with his studies, for a period of close to 2 months during his stay in the UK.

Sayhan Khan, studying in Std. III D, along with his brother, Sayed Khan of Std. VI D, are in Japan for a month's advanced training camp for Judo in the Federation of Judo, Wakayama. The camp in Tokyo, from 6th June to 2nd July, is an intensive training opportunity with the best coaches of the prestigious training institute. It is also a Japanese-Indian cultural exchange programme. The boys will gain knowledge of some great skills in their sport and have a wonderful opportunity to experience a different culture.

Our best wishes to these students. May their tribe increase!





Yoga Day Celebrations at Don Bosco -Nerul

The students and staff of **Don Bosco – Nerul** celebrated the 5th International Day of Yoga with great fervour on 21st June, 2019. Principal Fr. Donald Fernandez SDB explained the need to practise and spread awareness about the benefits of yoga in our lives. He spoke on the theme ‘Climate Action’ and emphasised the need for harmony between man and nature.

Ms. Jyotsna Chavan, the PT instructor, led the energetic students and teachers as they performed asanas like Vajrasana, Parvatasana, Padmasana

— **Debjani Bhattacharya**

and Trikonasana. Apart from the overall benefits of yoga, the benefits of each asana were explained to the gathered yoga enthusiasts. The programme culminated with the students performing the Shavasana to help relax and reduce stress.

“We have been practising yoga in our school regularly. Hence, we found it easy to perform the asanas with ease today,” said Master Sujal of Std. VIII B. The session concluded with the inference “Yoga daily keeps us healthy.”



Siddhi Pawar Highest Scorer at Convent Girls' High School, Prabhadevi



I am Siddhi Pawar and I scored 93.40% in the SSC Examination of March 2019. I wasn't really expecting to be the topper of my school but my efforts, as well as the support of my parents and my teachers, helped me reach the top. I am glad that every student in my school also fared well and we achieved our goal of cent percent results for our school despite the change in syllabus. I would like to thank my parents who admitted me into such a great institution and my teachers who have always been there to guide me and motivate me with my studies.

I am also passionate about hockey. Therefore, I would like to specially thank my Principal, Sr. Asha Almeida, as she encouraged me to pursue hockey along with my studies. Our team won the inter-school hockey tournament at the State level.

I thank my Alma Mater for what I am today and for instilling in me the right values because of which I am an independent and strong person, clear about the my goals in life.

Huzaifa Ansari Tops St. Anthony's High School, Versova

I believe that success does not belong to one person alone. There were many people backing me at every step to achieve this feat. Therefore, this is not just my achievement but it is ours. The credit for my achievement goes to other people in my life. I am really thankful to my teachers and parents because of whom I could score 92.20% in the SSC board exam. We were the first batch to face this newly changed syllabus where the internal marks had been withdrawn, except for Maths and Science, and the syllabus of the previous class was also included. Considering these dramatic and revolutionary changes made, scoring 92.20 % was indeed a great achievement.

I started studying for my board exam during the summer vacation and finished nearly 40% of my syllabus by the time school reopened. I would study for 3 – 4 hours at home, apart from my school and tuition hours, which really helped me a lot. I believe in qualitative study rather than quantitative study. So, studying for short durations with concentration is the best. Whenever a problem arose in any subject, I would always consult my teachers for a solution.

To all the Std. X aspirants, I would like to say that you should set your goals in the beginning and focus on it. Remember "Success usually come to those who are too busy to be looking for it."





Faith on Campus 2018-19 – a report

— Melanie D'Souza

“For one of the greatest joys that any educator can have is to see a student turn into a strong, well-integrated person, a leader, someone prepared to give.”

(Christus Vivit 221, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis)

To encourage students to be just this is the constant attempt of the Faith on Campus (FoC) initiative of St. Andrew's College, Bandra. This group comprising youth of the College meets every Friday with a new theme and a new activity each week. Started in 2013 by the then-Rector, Fr. Aniceto Pereira, they have only grown in faith and maturity under the able guidance of the current Rector, Fr. Magi Murzello, and Prof. Melanie D'Souza.

These regular interactions with alumni members also allow the students to network with various industries.

Our students actively participated in the Praise and Worship services held every month. Some of the themes included 'I Chose You First', 'Joy in the Presence of the Lord', 'It's Time for Jesus' and 'I Have Carved You on the Palm of My Hand'. Many may think that today's youth would rejoice only when they have an alcoholic drink in hand or at a dance pub. They'd be proven wrong if they saw the FoC youth in action at a praise and worship service – a new source of joy. This contagious joy was also visible when the students participated in Rocklamation, the Diocesan Youth Centre (DYC) gospel fest, held on 12th January, 2019.



Many youth struggle with knowing themselves. During the monthly Blessed Sacrament adoration services, in the serenity of the Chapel, the team led the youth to find themselves in the light of Christ. Adoration services were also held on special occasions i.e. the start of a new calendar year, Valentine's Day, etc.

The millennials lack resilience – a key skill required in the workplace. FoC organised an interaction with a few alumni at the FoC Sharing Time held on 12th October, 2018. Their testimonies lifted the spirits of the students when they shared how their faith helped them build resilience.

FoC also organised talks wherein the students were enlightened on various topics by various speakers. On 20th July, 2018, Mr. Lenny Soares spoke on the 'Joy of the Cup'. He highlighted the importance of not giving up and working with dedication and passion in life to reach both, our earthly and heavenly goals. On 10th August, 2018, Deacon Ivan Fernandes' theme was 'Paint the Canvas of Your Lives'. He opened the minds of the students to understand the implications of their choices. On 19th October, 2019, Prof. Melanie D'Souza explained the history of 'Hallows Eve'. On 11th January, 2019, Fr. Sydney Fernandes from Hawaii addressed the students on how we have become so

tech-savvy that sometimes we forget to be humans. On 18th January, 2019, Mr. Ralph Pinto shared the interesting history of the roots of the Catholic Church.

Studying the lives of men and women in the Holy Bible and the lives of saints can be a great source of inspiration to our youth. FoC screened the movie 'Samson' at FoC Movie Time this year. Students also participated in a discussion on the life of St. Benedict at FoC #BFF scenes.

On 12th August, 2018, the students visited the Shrine of the Infant Jesus Shrine, Nashik. After they attended the Eucharistic celebration there, they played a set of gospel-based games. This was followed by a very heated but insightful debate on 'Is God to be feared?'



In order to strengthen its identity as a Catholic college, in 2016, Fr. Magi Murzello (Rector) introduced daily Mass at the College chapel. The FoC students help with the liturgy and choir on a daily basis. On 31st August, 2018, Mass was offered and

a prayer service was held to pray for those affected by the Kerala floods. On 5th October, 2018, Fr. Avon Vaz SFX from Arunachal Pradesh conducted a healing service.

On 7th October, 2018, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, FoC organised Synodgy. Attended by over 800 youth from across Mumbai, this event comprised a live gospel band at Apostolic Carmel High School, Bandra and a live rosary walk wherein the students showcased the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary through the classic allegory of the hare and the tortoise. Bishop Barthol Barretto (Bishop in charge of youth for the Archdiocese of Bombay) flagged off the Rosary at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount and accompanied the youth all the way through to St. Andrew's Auditorium where the event concluded with a celebration of the Eucharist.



On 14th December, 2018, 'Put on Your Santa Caps' was organised. This programme included a praise and worship session, preaching by Deacon Ivan Fernandes, a healing service conducted by Fr. Melroy Fernandes and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The students also constructed a Christmas tree and had to decorate it with an ornament picked from a box. Each ornament had an act of service printed on it which the student had to complete before Christmas. In collaboration with DLLE, FoC organised a newspaper drive as part of the 'Joy of Giving' week, the proceeds of which were donated to Cherish India towards the operations of children with bone marrow cancer.

FoC Christmas activities continued with 'Heart of Christmas' held on 21st December, 2018 and 'Christmas@Andrews' held on 22nd December. The College crib, based on the theme 'Christmas Then

and Xmas Now', was designed and decorated by the students. An art competition (Theme: What is Christmas to you?), an inter-departmental carol singing competition and the screening of a short home production film 'A Christmas Party' were some of the other activities held.



On 28th December, 2018, the students visited the mentally challenged senior citizens' home, special children's home and the juvenile home at Mankhurd with Sr. Rosita and her team.



Lent 2019 saw many programmes organised by the team. On Ash Wednesday, Bishop Barthol Barretto presided over the 11:30 am Mass and imposed ashes while Fr. Warner D'Souza did likewise at the 1pm Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was made available from 8am to 4pm. After Mass, students were invited to mark their names on a large cross outside the Chapel as a reminder to carry their own daily

crosses. This Cross was erected at the grotto at the start of Holy Week.



The College chapel was also the site of the Lenten missions preached by Fr. Avon Vaz SFX on 8th and 9th March, 2019. In addition to the traditional Way of the Cross conducted every Friday in Lent, a unique one was organised on 15th March, 2019. On Pro-life Day, 25th March, 2019, the Eucharist was celebrated by Bishop Barthol followed by a pro-life-themed Way of the Cross.

Quo Vadis, a Lenten mission for youth, was organised by the Archdiocese of Bombay and the Diocesan Youth Centre (DYC) in collaboration with the Faith on Campus group at 4 locations across Mumbai viz. Thane, Borivali, Vile Parle, Colaba. Our students scripted, directed and acted in the play 'Quo Vadis' which was held on the second





Ashwin Castellino and Omar Fernandes, being ordained diocesan priests this year. On 12th April, 2019, our students animated their Thanksgiving Mass with great joy.

Pope Francis, in his closing homily at World Youth Day 2019 exclaimed, “Dear young people, you are not the future but the now of God and He invites and calls you... speak out and realise the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you.” FoC strives to bring the young people to God and the rest is their dream between them and God.

day of each mission. This play expressed the Way of the Cross in the lives of the youth of today. It was followed by reflections before the Blessed Sacrament.

On Good Friday, our students enacted the Way of the Cross from the Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount to St. Andrew’s College. This year’s theme was ‘The Scandal of the Cross’. Flagged off by Bishop John Rodrigues, Bishop Barthol Barretto accompanied over 1000 devotees all the way through.

Our College has been blessed with 2 alumni,



10 Films for Every Teacher

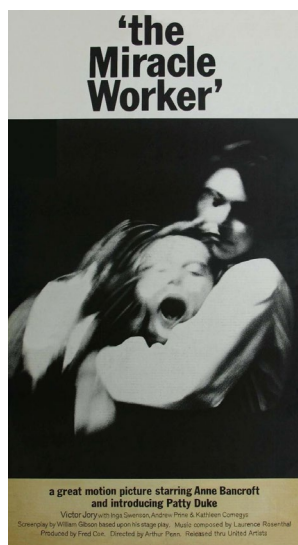
— Dr. Omkar Bhatkar

Cinema is not only about making people dream. It's about changing things and making people think.
- Nadine Labaki

The world is a beautiful place to be; just that, at times, it feels unbearable but time goes on and everything seems alright again. Being a teacher is as difficult and challenging as most other professions. But is being a teacher a career or a destined path of life? That is a question one cannot easily answer. We live only one life and, in that one life, it is not possible to answer a question for which we need to live two lives.

Can “teaching” be learnt? If it is a skill, can it be honed? Is it a talent that can be acquired or is it something inherent in ourselves? It is simply not possible to answer where teaching comes from. But what is possible is to realise that if one chooses a particular path then justice must be done to it. To be a passionate teacher is to know that your presence makes a difference to your pupils and your colleagues. To create such a presence in a changing world is not easy. To be stable in an unstable world also seems absurd. But to embrace change and adapt and mould oneself to the changing times can certainly bring about better experiences.

Reading makes us grow. It transforms us and possibly enlightens us. Similarly, cinema is another powerful medium. Cinema is a mirror that can change the world just as teaching can. Cinema fills the empty spaces of our lives and, at times, uplifts us from a state of brokenness. Cinema makes us think and some films change the way we look at life. There may be countless films that are important to watch before we die. As a teacher, I put down my 10 favourite films that every teacher should watch. They may identify with the protagonist or relate to the stories on screen or possibly laugh or even cry at this path they have chosen which is neither easy nor difficult.



The Miracle Worker (1962)

Directed by Arthur Penn

Screenplay by William Gibson

Language – English

Arthur Penn directs this powerful film version of William Gibson's play about the adolescent Helen Keller, a deaf-mute sealed off from society in her own world, and Annie Sullivan, the teacher who works with Helen to teach her how to communicate with others. It highlights her remarkable achievements despite her blindness and deafness and shows the indefatigable efforts of her teacher (Bancroft) to connect with the frustrated and recalcitrant young girl.



Stand and Deliver (1988)

Directed by Ramón Menéndez

Written by Ramón Menéndez, Tom Musca

Language – English

It is not easy to teach students who are not willing to learn, particularly if the subject is calculus. In this Edward James Olmos classic, he takes control of a class of dropout-prone students and not only keeps them in school but teaches them some of the toughest topics. The students featured are, not surprisingly, urban and low-income (but some of the strongest teachers are needed in these very schools, even today). Where this movie was ahead of its time was in its depiction of Hispanic students.

Dead Poets Society (1989)

Directed by Peter Weir

Written by Tom Schulman

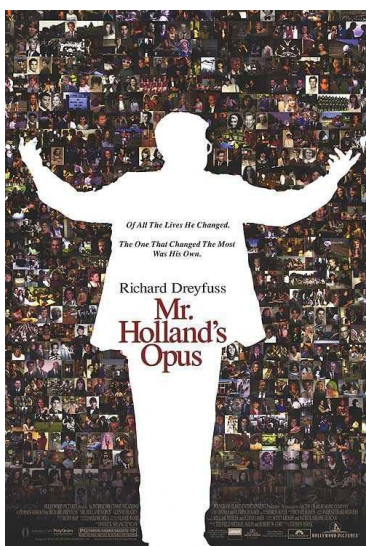
Language – English

Robin Williams tones down his usually manic comic approach in this successful period drama. In 1959, the Welton Academy is a staid but well-respected preparatory school where education is a pragmatic and rather dull affair. Several of the students, however, have their thoughts on the learning process (and life itself) changed when a new teacher comes to the school. John Keating (Williams) is an unconventional educator who tears chapters of his textbooks and asks his students to stand on their desks to see the world from a new angle.

Keating introduces his students to poetry, and his free-thinking attitude and the liberating mindset. With his philosophy, he inspires his students to look at poetry from a different perspective of authentic



knowledge and feelings. The leap to pursue your ambitions and dreams through poetry, to break free from the norm, to go against the status quo and live life unapologetically is the story of Dead Poets Society told in a powerful way.



Mr. Holland's Opus (1995)

Directed by Stephen Herek

Written by Patrick Sheane Duncan

Language – English

In 1965, passionate musician Glenn Holland takes a day job as a high school music teacher, convinced it is just a small obstacle on the road to his true calling: writing a historic opus. As the decades roll by with the composition unwritten but generations of students inspired through his teaching, Holland must redefine his life's purpose.



Blackboards (2001)

Directed by Samira Makhmalbaf.

Written by Mohsen Makhmalbaf and Samira Makhmalbaf

Language – Kurdish

Itinerant Kurdish teachers, carrying blackboards on their backs, look for students in the hills and villages of Iran near the Iraqi border during the Iran-Iraq war. Said falls in with a group of old men looking for their bombed-out village. He offers to guide them and takes as his wife, Halaleh, the clan's lone woman, a widow with a young son. Reeboir attaches himself to a dozen pre-teen boys weighed down by the contraband they carry across the border. They are mules; always on the move. Said and Reeboir try to teach as their potential students keep walking. Danger is close; armed soldiers patrol the skies, the roads, and the border. Is there a role for a teacher? Is there hope?

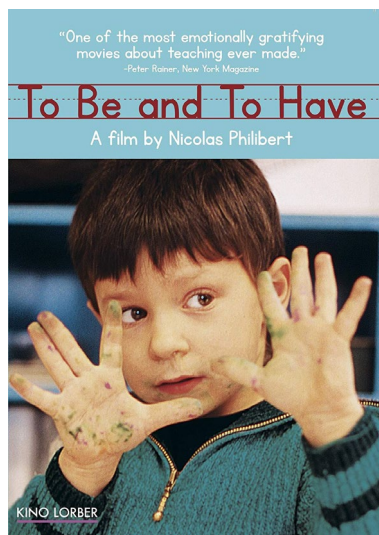
October Sky (1999)

Directed by Joe Johnston

Based on a story October Sky by Homer Hickam

Language – English

In a 1950's mining town called Coalwood, Homer Hickam is a kid with only one future in sight – to work in the local coal mine like his father. However, in October 1957, everything changes when the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, goes into orbit. With that event, Homer is inspired to learn how to build rockets. With his friends and the local nerd, Homer sets out to do just that by trial and a lot of error. Unfortunately, most of the town, especially Homer's father, thinks that they are wasting their time. Only one teacher in the high school understands their efforts and lets them know that they could become contenders in the national science fair with college scholarships being the prize. Now the gang must learn to perfect their craft and overcome the many problems facing them as they shoot for the stars.



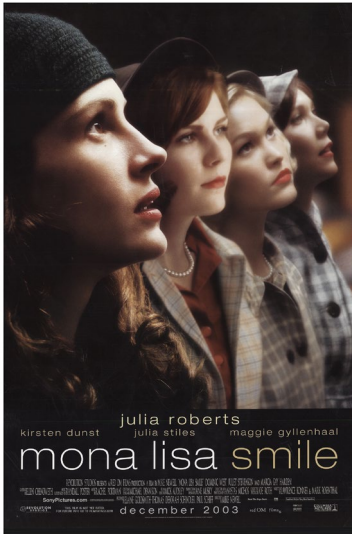
To Be and to Have / Être et avoir (2002)

Directed by Nicolas Philibert

Written by Nicolas Philibert

Language – French

How do we learn to live with others and their wishes? Director Nicolas Philibert poses this question in a village schoolhouse in Auvergne where Georges Lopez teaches 13 children, ages ranging from about 4 to 12 years. Against a landscape of mountains and farmland, from driving in snow to rain to sun, the children gather in Lopez's warm and colourful classroom to read, write dictation, cook and sort things out. At home, the older ones do homework with parents after their chores. At the year's end, they look ahead to the next, visiting the middle school and meeting the little ones coming in the fall. As they learn sums and adjectives with Lopez's help, they also learn to live side-by-side. Peter Rainer of New York Magazine wrote that "it demonstrates, without overreaching, what an actual teacher can do to shape lives."



Mona Lisa Smile (2003)

Directed by Mike Newell

Written by Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal

Language – English

Julia Roberts plays a 1950s liberal female professor who encounters a few hurdles while trying to pass the same values along to her traditional Wellesley art students. Katherine Ann Watson (Julia Roberts) arrives at Wellesley College in the mid-1950s as a professor of Art History, looking to inspire change in her students. Like many women of the time, most Wellesley girls have one goal after they graduate – to get married. Professor Watson herself is unmarried and is taken aback by the culture at the small, liberal arts university. Many of her attempts to reform the culture are rebuked, some with disciplinary meetings with college officials. Her unorthodox teaching methods as well as her personal opinions are too much for the college to handle and she is given the ultimatum of sticking to the syllabus or leaving. What does she choose?

Freedom Writers (2007)

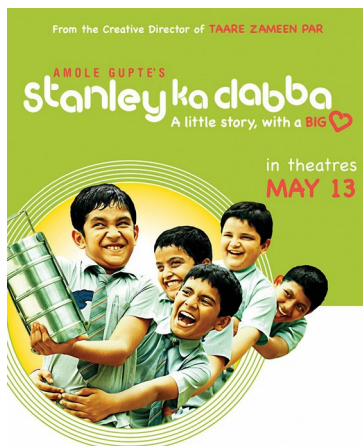
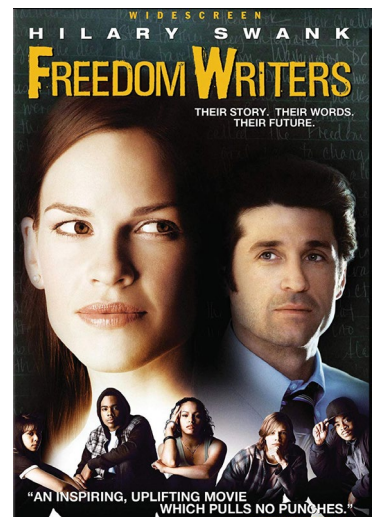
Directed by Richard LaGravenese

Based on The Freedom Writers Diary by The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell

Language – English

This is based on another true story. Here, Hilary Swank plays the real-life Erin Gruwell. Her dedication also leads to a compassionate understanding of her underprivileged students and she achieves the ultimate breakthrough when she informs them that they are not the first young people besieged by problems. Although she is not permitted to use The Diary of Anne Frank, she does precisely that, at her own expense. She also buys notebooks for her students and encourages them to keep diaries that she would only read if they permit her to do so. Needless to say, breaking all the rules once more allows her to become an exceptional

teacher whom her students come to love.



Stanley ka Dabba (2011)

Directed by Amol Gupte

Written by Amol Gupte

Language – Hindi

Stanley (Partho) is the first to arrive at school and sits alone in the classroom waiting for his friends to troop in. He is also the only one who does not get his own tiffin box. Not that it matters; his friends are around to share their food. The villain of the piece, if you can call him that, is the Hindi teacher (Amole Gupte) who is obsessed with food. The very smell of batata vada can send him drooling and it is this love for grub that drives a wedge between him and his students. What happens when the Hindi teacher restricts Stanley from coming to school for not bringing tiffin?

In a Lighter Vein

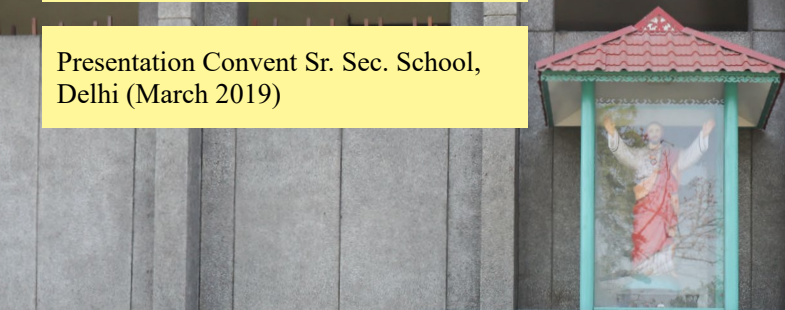


1. Why was the fraction apprehensive about marrying the decimal?
Because he would have to convert.
2. Why do plants hate math?
It gives them square roots.
3. Why did the student get upset when his teacher called him average?
It was a mean thing to say!
4. Why was the math book depressed?
It had a lot of problems.
5. Why is the obtuse triangle always so frustrated?
Because it is never right.
6. Why can you never trust a math teacher holding graphing paper?
They must be plotting something.
7. Why was the equal sign so humble?
Because she knew she wasn't greater than or less than anyone else.
8. What do you call the number 7 and the number 3 when they go out on a date?
The odd couple (but 7 is in her prime).
9. What do you call a number that can't stay in one place?
A Roamin' numeral.
10. Did you hear the one about the statistician?
Probably.
11. What do you call dudes who love math?
Algebras.
12. I'll do algebra, I'll do trig. I'll even do statistics. But graphing is where I draw the line!
13. Why should you never talk to Pi?
Because she'll go on and on and on forever.
14. Why are parallel lines so tragic if they have so much in common?
It's a shame they'll never meet.
15. Are monsters good at math?
Not unless you Count Dracula.
16. What's the best way to flirt with a math teacher?
Use acute angle.
17. Did you hear about the mathematician who is afraid of negative numbers?
They'd stop at nothing to avoid them.
18. How do you stay warm in any room?
Just huddle in the corner, where it's always 90 degrees.
19. Why is six afraid of seven?
Because seven eight nine!
20. Why DID seven eat nine?
Because you're supposed to eat 3 squared meals a day!
21. Why does nobody talk to circles?
Because there is no point.
22. Dear Algebra, stop trying to find your X. They are never coming back – don't ask Y.
23. **Teacher:** Why are you doing your multiplication on the floor?
Student: You told me not to use tables.
24. After a sheepdog gets all the sheep in the pen, he reports back to the farmer: "All 40 accounted for."
"But I only have 36 sheep," says the farmer.
"I know," says the sheepdog. "But I rounded them up."
25. There are three kinds of people in the world:
Those who can count
and those who can't.





Our Lady of Nazareth, Bhayander
Bhayander, Thane (June 2019)



Presentation Convent Sr. Sec. School,
Delhi (March 2019)



St. Teresa's Convent High School,
Santacruz, Mumbai (June 2019)

ANDREAN NETWORK OF DYNAMIC AND INSPIRED
EDUCATORS (ANDIE) *announces*

FUN-ference for ABE PrincipOwls

Topic: Being Owlsome!
at St. Stanislaus Villa, LonOwla.

Departure from St. Andrew's C-owllege at 8am on 2nd September, 2019.

Return to Mumbai by 8pm on 4th September, 2019.

Payment: Rs.3,500/- for owl by yourself/ Rs. 2,500/- for twin-sharing
(All self-contained rooms)

Pay by cheque in favour of St. Andrew's Educational Foundation

Last date of registration: 24th August 2019

Limited seats in the Parliament of Owls



FAQs

Whooooo can come?

ABE PrincipOwls are invited for the FUN-ference but conditions apply.

Hoooo cares! What conditions?

PrincipOwls who have Irritable Owl Syndrome, i.e. The ones who grOwl, scOwl and smell fOwl are not Owlcome.

Can I bring my peon along?

Sorry, you have to come Owl by yourself. Owl of us are there to take care of you. You will be Owl-right.

I am Owlways anxious, can I come?

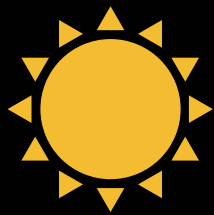
There's an Owl Age Home nearby. Maybe we can get you admitted. You can hOwl at the moon Owl night.

Will there be any entertainment?

Owlbiously, it's a FUN-ference. It's FUN Owl the time. Music by BeatOwls and Magic Shows by Hoooo-dini.

What must I carry Owl-ong?

T-Owl, bed linen (bed sheet, bedcover & pillow case), t-Owlet articles and mosquito repellents.



WISHING PRINCIPOWLS A H-OWLARIOUS TIME AT THE FUN-FERENCE



*This issue is sponsored by St. Andrew's College, Bandra.
If your institution would like to sponsor future issues, kindly contact the Editor.*