

# KAIROS

GLOBAL

## UPDATE ALERT!

SHELTON PINHEIRO



ALSO ↓

*A Paintbrush  
for God*

■ ASHISH ROZARIO

**ANCHORED  
IN FAITH**

■ A JOSEPH ANTONY



## MARY, MY BELOVED MOTHER



Holy Mary, help those in need, give strength to the weak, comfort the sorrowful, pray for God's people, assist the clergy, intercede for religious. May all who seek you help experience your unfailing protection. Amen.

# EDITOR'S ROOM



DR. CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL

 @readkairos

ON THE SPIRITUAL FRONT, WHAT ARE YOUR EFFORTS FOR CONTINUOUS GROWTH?

## A STORY ABOUT THE EAGLE

**A**mong its species, the eagle has the longest life-span. It can live up to 70 years. But to reach this age, the eagle must make a very difficult decision! In its 40th year, the eagle's long and flexible talons can no longer grab prey which serves as food.

Its long and sharp beak becomes bent. The thick feathers of its old and heavy wings begin to stick to its chest making flight difficult. At that point, the eagle is left with only two options: DIE or go through a painful process of CHANGE!

This process lasts for 150 days (5 months). It requires the eagle to fly to its eyrie upon the mountain top. There the eagle knocks its beak against a rock until it is able to pull it out. Then the eagle will wait for a new beak to grow. This process is repeated with its talons also. When its talons grow back, the eagle starts plucking its old feathers. And after this, the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and LIVES for 30 more years!

Of course, as the initial phrase says, this is a story or a myth and not a fact but it powerfully communicates the idea that to continue to be relevant and useful, one needs to go through the process of constant renewal. This is true regarding our personal, professional and spiritual realms.

In this issue of *Kairos Global*, various authors share with us their efforts to remain updated especially in their spiritual pursuits. Every time we spare our time to spend with the Lord and every time we receive a sacrament meaningfully, we are renewing ourselves.

In the area of business and industry, the basic trait needed to survive and expand is continuous improvement. Every organisation and its operations need to continually reinvent to avoid becoming obsolete. Kaizen is a beautiful Japanese word which communicates the idea powerfully.

On the spiritual front, what are your efforts for continuous growth? When Jesus speaks about our need to be perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect, he definitely means our journey towards growth which will be complete only at our last breath.

Some of the images used by St Paul also remind us to be ever vigilant and grow continuously. Running faithfully, fighting the war well, are very good metaphors of being ever prepared and ever growing.

At Kairos, we will be happy to hear from you about how you keep yourself updated and relevant in the personal, professional and especially spiritual dimensions of your life.

Let's grow together!

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

[chackochan.njavallil@jykairosmedia.org](mailto:chackochan.njavallil@jykairosmedia.org)



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I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.  
**John 10:10**

**PATRON**

Bishop Mar Raphael Thattil  
(Ecclesiastical Advisor, Jesus Youth International)

**SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR**

Fr. Joseph Ezhumayil  
(Jesus Youth International Chaplain)

**PRINTER AND PUBLISHER**

Dr. Edward Edezhath

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Shoy Thomas  
(Jesus Youth International Coordinator)

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Dr. Chackochan Njavallil

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Joshy Joseph, Houston, USA  
(joshy.joseph@jykairosmedia.org)

**ISSUE EDITORS**

A Joseph Antony, India  
Alina Ann Mathew, India  
Tania Rose Josun, India

**CIRCULATION COORDINATOR**

Anto Puthur, Cochin, India +91 96055 11644  
(circulations@jykairosmedia.org)

**ASSOCIATE CIRCULATION COORDINATORS**

**AUSTRALIA:** Mintu Vijoy, Melbourne +61 452 538 785  
**BAHRAIN:** Neenu Maria Jibin +973 33715472  
**BANGLADESH:** Tias Victor Palma +880 1717-152023  
**CAMBODIA:** Sophearong Ravy, Phnom Penh +855 96 426 5472  
**CANADA:** Joby Joseph Ontario +1 2899 686 074  
**EAST TIMOR:** Sr. Julie Antony +670 77827618 (Whatsapp+91 97447 32431)  
**GERMANY:** Anna Paul, Berlin +49 176 83495451  
**INDIA:** Austin Michael, Mangalore +91 8277405251  
**IRELAND:** Suresh V Joy +353 87 963 0904  
**ISRAEL:** Jaison K Thattil, Tel Aviv +972 55 9974339  
**ITALY:** Anoop P Varghese +39 3884256258  
**KUWAIT:** Rajeev J Chacko, Ahmadi +965 66388310  
**MALAYSIA:** Sweety Kamala Prasad +60 162568139  
**NETHERLANDS:** Jojo Varghese, Utrecht +31 684974552  
**NEW ZEALAND:** Derick Daniel, Auckland +64 29 127 0650  
**OMAN:** Jiju Paul, Ruwi +968 99467516  
**PAKISTAN:** Asif Emmanuel +92 3022534254  
**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** Abin Michael +675 7479 4368  
**QATAR:** Metty Don, Doha +974 7040 868  
**SINGAPORE:** Savio Francies +65 9021 9798  
**SRILANKA:** Sonal Fernando +94 77 3818399  
**SWITZERLAND:** Anu Jose +41 799177100  
**THAILAND:** Vineeth Andrew +66 86 372 6601  
**UAE:** Thomas Jose +971 521316868  
**UGANDA:** Mboowa Ronald +256 706844152  
**UK:** Mathachen Maduckakuzhy +44 7969 365686  
**USA:** Denny Joseph +1 (832) 640-3106

**FINANCE COORDINATOR**

Leena Shaju, Cochin, India +91 62382 79115; finance@jykairosmedia.org

**DESIGN**

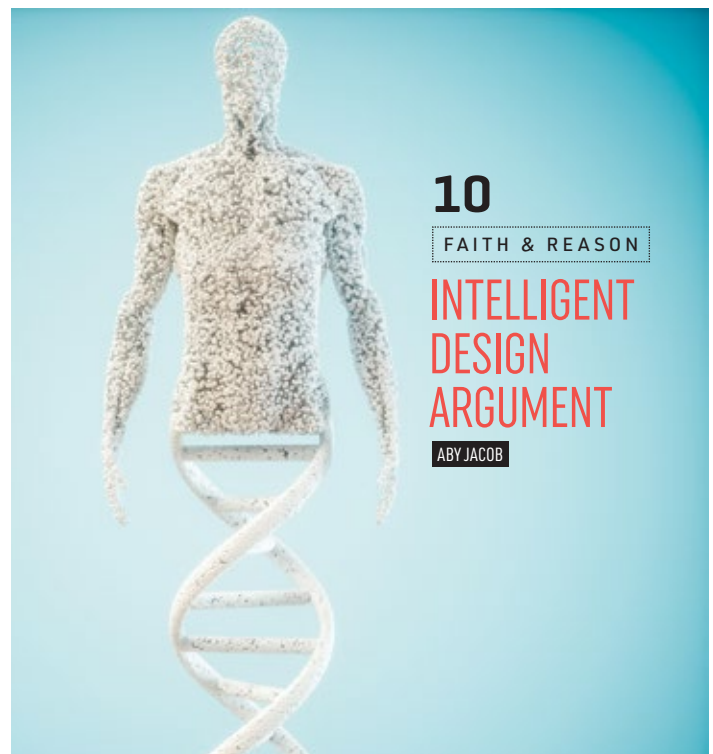
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**MAILING ADDRESS**

**Kairos Media USA**  
 3010 Mason Grove Ln  
 Pearland, TX, USA. 77584

info@jykairosmedia.org  
 +1 832 592 3675

**Kairos Media UK**  
 St Charles Street,  
 Sheffield S9 3WU,  
 United Kingdom

infouk@jykairosmedia.org  
 + 44 7969365686

**Kairos Media India**  
 No 8/174, Navodaya  
 Studio Complex,  
 Thengod P.O.,  
 Cochin, Kerala,  
 India. Pin: 682030

infoin@jykairosmedia.org  
 +91 98957111718



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# ASK



FR. BITAJU

Fr. Bitaju Mathew, O.S.S.T. belongs to the Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Captives (Trinitarians). He serves as the Secretary Vice Provincial of the Order in India and is currently the Chaplain of the Jesus Youth International Formation Team.

➔ **Q. How did Noah fit the millions of species of animals into his ark? It doesn't take a mathematical genius to realise the physical impossibility of this.**

Thanks for your important question on whether the vast species of animals did actually fit into Noah's ark. I would like to respond to your question by delineating the Catholic understanding and teaching of the Holy Bible, more specifically, the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis.

In the first place, the Catholic Church teaches that the Bible contains reliable scientific, historical, and cultural data, but at the same time, it is not primarily a science book or a history book. It is primarily a book authored by God through the instrumentality of a number of divinely inspired human authors for the purposes of communicating to us the truths of our salvation. The dogmatic constitution of 'Dei Verbum' (1965) of the II Vatican Council states that 'the books of the Old Testament, ... reveal to all men the knowledge of God and of man and the ways in which God, just and merciful, deals with men' (#15).

Secondly, it is important to understand the Catholic view on the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950), delineating the book of Genesis states that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not written in the same way as modern histories. These chapters use metaphorical language to describe truths fundamental for our salvation. We can admit that these chapters borrow material from non-biblical sources, however, these first eleven chapters of Genesis do record history in some real sense; exactly how these chapters

record history is a matter that experts need to define further. None of these facts should be understood as undermining our belief that Scripture is inspired by God and therefore free from all error (#38).

This would mean that a Catholic is not bound to hold to a literalistic interpretation of the narrative on the ark of Noah. Rather we must hold to the idea that the ancient author was certainly affirming historical truths, but he does it in a manner that is unique to the mode of writing and the literary genre of the ancient authors at his time. The *Catechism* gives us a beautiful summary of how these passages in the book of Genesis should be understood: 'The inspired authors have placed them at the beginning of Scripture to express in their solemn language the truths of creation – its origin and its end in God, its order and goodness, the vocation of man, and finally the drama of sin and the hope of salvation. Read in the light of Christ, within the unity of Sacred Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church, these texts remain the principal source for catechesis on the mysteries of the "beginning": creation, fall, and promise of salvation' (CCC #289).

Therefore, for a Catholic, what is important from the narrative on the ark of Noah are the truths of creation and salvation, that is, how the human race fell out of the relationship with God and his plan of salvation, rather than the number of animals and how they fit into Noah's ark.



YOUCAT 13

## CAN THE CHURCH ERR IN QUESTIONS OF FAITH?

**The faithful as a whole cannot err in faith, because Jesus promised his disciples that he would send them the Spirit of truth and keep them in the truth [Jn 14:17]. [80-82, 85-87, 92, 100]**

Just as the disciples believed Jesus with their whole heart, a Christian can rely completely on the Church when he asks about the way to life. Since Jesus Christ himself gave his apostles the commission to teach, the Church has a teaching authority [the Magisterium] and must not remain silent. Although individual members of the Church can err and even make serious mistakes, the Church as a whole can never fall away from God's truth. The Church carries through the ages a living truth that is greater than herself. We speak about a *depositum fidei*, a deposit of faith that is to be preserved. If such a truth is publicly disputed or distorted, the Church is called upon to clarify again 'what has always and everywhere been believed by all' [St. Vincent of Lerins, d. 450].

DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH

## Prayer Intentions November

### Children Who Suffer

We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection.



# Pope talk



*Young people are missing the 'spiritual capital' that gives life meaning and hence the youth suicide rate has gone up.*

*Technology can do much: it teaches us the 'what' and the 'how' and so our actions become sterile and do not bring fulfillment to life, not even economic life.*

## The cross of Christ remains the anchor of salvation.



*Christians cannot be indifferent to corruption.*

*Every human being is sacred; many of our brothers and sisters die sacrificed on the altar of profit, amid clouds of the sacrilegious incense of indifference.*

*The first element of discernment is prayer as He remains at the door of the heart.*

*Discerning the will of God is not easy, for appearances are deceptive, but familiarity with God can melt doubts and fears in a gentle way, making our lives increasingly receptive to his gentle light.*

*Pray to God with simplicity. Just like we greet a friend, we can say 'hello' to God throughout the day and true prayer is familiarity and confidence with God, to feel his presence and is not reciting prayers like a parrot...*

# JESUS YOUTH



**Dr Edward Edezhath**, one of the pioneers of Jesus Youth, gives us a glimpse of the growth of the movement.

## We Gather to Face a Challenge



### JESUS YOUTH AND THE SYNODAL PATH

Suresh came to some of us with an important issue. 'So many of our senior youth come to this city but find no way to connect with the movement.' They were all committed leaders in their own areas a few years ago but migrated to the city for jobs or studies. When they were uprooted from their native places, they had to also leave their 'first love' and forsake their faith groups. 'If we don't do anything, they will become lukewarm Catholics and many of them will abandon their faith.' Suresh had made a long list of once active youth who migrated to this big city and had now gone into hiding.

This became the starting point for a number of gatherings, discussions and some practical solutions.

### SYNODALITY IS TO FACE EMERGING CHALLENGES

These days the Universal Church is reflecting on synodality. The word 'synod' indicates journeying together. It is this synodal approach that builds communities and leads the members to mission. One important point is, when a community faces some challenges the synodal approach becomes highly relevant.

An excellent example from the history of the Church is narrated in the

Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15. What do we find there? The early church was growing very fast, and a sizable number of non-Jews had also joined. But some leaders were imposing Jewish customs on others, saying, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved' (Acts 15:1). This teaching was fully based on the Bible, but many others were questioning its relevance. The Church decided to gather and seek the Lord's guidance to overcome this serious conflict. This led to the First Jerusalem Council, some important discussions and decisions and the renewed missionary fervour in the growing Church.

### CHALLENGES, FACE IT OR RUN AWAY

As we journey forward as a community, challenges and changes are bound to arise. The big question is how should a movement, or a group respond to the problems that come up before it. The one-word answer is 'synodality'. Jesus Youth will surely recall several challenges that came up in the past and how the groups effectively faced it.

It is also important to ask, what are some other unsuitable ways in which we sometimes respond to challenges?

**Denial or thinking 'there is no problem here':** This attitude stops the group from seeing the problem and

looking for ways to overcome it. For example, many active good leaders were quitting active ministry due to migration, and most people thought that it was only a normal phenomenon, and there was nothing to do about it. But Suresh thought otherwise and was eagerly looking for solutions to the problem.

**Fear and anxiety:** When the challenges seem to be too big to face, we become scared. When the Roman Empire, the Jewish authorities and the whole world were against the early Christians, they were upset but the Apostles exhorted them to respond with joy.

**From blame to resentment to anger:** When Suresh approached the local leaders to do something about the new migrants to the city, some responded with a blaming tone, 'Now they have jobs and are comfortable, and they have forgotten the Lord.' This happens often, when problems arise, we are mostly concerned about who is to blame for it and feel angry towards them.

**Avoid facing it:** 'We have to pray a lot!' has become a cliché response when any serious challenge is mentioned. Of course, prayer and seeking God's guidance about an issue at hand is an integral part of facing a problem, but an over-spiritual response can be a way of not responding to it.





'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved' (Acts 15:1). This teaching was fully based on the Bible, but many others were questioning its relevance. The Church decided to gather and seek the Lord's guidance to overcome this serious conflict. This led to the First Jerusalem Council, some important discussions and decisions and the renewed missionary fervour in the growing Church.

**Facing it alone:** I am glad that Suresh did not try to solve the problem alone. Rather he decided to place it before the group of leaders who should be concerned about it. When challenges come up there can be different responses. At one extreme, either due to lack of awareness, negligence, or fear, leaders may avoid facing it. At the other extreme one leader or a small group may go ahead with some plans to face and solve it, without ensuring the participation of others. In the long run, this partisan approach will weaken the community and Christian mission.

#### SYNODALITY, THE WHOLESOME PATH TO FACE CHALLENGES

The problem of 'disappearing leadership' became an important discussion point. But it did not end there. Step by step, some solutions were found leading to certain effective practical steps. Naturally we ask, how does a community go about solving problems? In other words, what is the synodal approach to facing challenges?

Synodal approach is the genuine Christian path to face challenges that come up before any community. And it follows some suitable steps.

1. The group becomes aware of issues, problems and challenges.
2. They get ready to undergo a conversion to follow the synodal path of love and communion.
3. They gather together to walk the path of synodality.
4. The community seeks the Lord's guidance through a process of participative discernment.
5. They get clarity and build consensus.
6. The group agrees on practical steps.
7. Go forth in mission, responding to the Lord's plan.

As I mentioned earlier, Suresh and his friends found a challenge faced by many senior youth as they were migrating to a new place. They realised that if the issue was left unattended, that would ruin the lives of many committed leaders and gradually weaken the movement in the city. They took the initiative to go and meet all the main leaders and agreed to come together to discuss the matter. The meetings that followed were times of prayer, discussion, listening, and soul searching. Gradually several proposals emerged, including the starting of some small groups, a Monday common group, some new prayer formats and a series of input plans. But more than all this a new sense of community and renewed mission transformed the Jesus Youth leaders of that city. ■■

.....  
**Dr. Edward Edezhath**, is a retired professor from St. Albert's College, Ernakulam. He lives with his wife Audrey in Kochi, India.

FAITH & REASON

# Intelligent Design Argument

## The Existence of God Part 2

In the second part, **Aby Jacob** presents the Intelligent Design argument to prove the existence of God.



**T**he existence of God is foundational to constructing a systematic defense for the absolute truth. If God does not exist, making a case for the Christian faith is meaningless. In a previous article, I introduced two cosmological arguments for the existence of God as the Cause and Necessary Sufficient Reason for the existence of the universe. This article aims to present another argument known as Intelligent Design. Through these articles, my goal is to present a robust cumulative case for God's existence without appealing to Scripture. I hope this may help you develop an intellectually rigorous faith in the absolute truth.

Think about the following question for a moment before you continue reading! Are you an accidental byproduct of unguided natural processes without intrinsic value and purpose (as atheists believe) or created by a designer with intrinsic worth and purpose (as theists believe)? I find many reasons to believe that I am not an accidental byproduct of nature but designed with value, dignity, objective meaning, and eternal purpose being made in the image of God.

#### **A Commonsense Understanding of Design**

Everyone can discover evidence for design themselves in nature. For example, suppose you are driving by the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, where you can see the giant carved faces of the past few American presidents on a mountain. By seeing them, you will never think that it was formed by soil erosion or wind. You will never conclude that natural law or chance produced them. Instead, your common sense will tell you that a sculptor purposefully designed those faces because you can notice complexity (human faces) and specificity (past presidents). This is a simple illustration of design detection.

Scientific naturalists (logically

equivalent to atheists) believe that we are just a product of random mutation and natural selection (aka macro-evolution). If unguided macro-evolution is true, did evolution know we need eyes to see, ears to hear, mouth to eat, tongue to taste, teeth to chew, nose to smell, legs to walk, hands to work, etc.? Did evolution know all these features must be arranged perfectly for specific functions? What if eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, teeth, nose, legs, and hands exchanged positions? Wouldn't they become purposeless? Knowing the complexity and specificity using common sense, how can one deny a designer mind behind and give credit to blind natural processes? Wouldn't it devalue our life in the first place?

Moreover, how can one trust their thoughts if their mind is not designed for the purpose of thinking but was accidentally formed for no particular purpose? Their thoughts are just some chemical fluctuations, then. When we take atheism to its logical conclusion, human beings are just an accidental byproduct of blind, unguided natural processes which had no goal of becoming what we are now. In the bottom line, we have no intrinsic value, meaning, or purpose. We are just a thick chunk of meat that happened to exist for no reason. Would you believe this purely naturalistic (atheistic) conclusion that devalues your very existence?

An innocent four-year-old child can understand the hallmark of design with common sense better than the adult atheists who blindly believe that the natural world is all there is and that everything they see is just cosmic accidents. The evidence for design is overwhelming in nature. To understand design, one does not need to believe in God or the special revelation (Bible). We can see a lot of examples through our naked eye. We can also detect designs through empirical findings. In this article, I aim to briefly introduce the

scientific theory of Intelligent Design (ID), the scientific method, the design detection method, and its application in the biological discovery of complex and specified information in DNA. I would further argue that ID has a philosophical/theological implication that points to a designer, which is an argument for the existence of God.

### The Scientific Theory of Intelligent Design

Intelligent Design (ID) is a scientific theory of design detection. ID is a scientific research programme with a community of scientists, philosophers, and other scholars who seek evidence for design in nature.<sup>i</sup> As soon as the label 'Intelligent Design or ID' is noticed, scientific naturalists (atheists) reject it by listing it as a different version of 'creationism.' Honest critics of ID can easily identify the difference between creationism and intelligent design. Creationism starts with religious texts and finds out how the writings can be reconciled with science, but ID starts with empirical evidence and infers design based on the findings. Historian of science Ronald Numbers, a critic of ID, agrees that 'the creationist label is inaccurate when it comes to the ID movement.' Numbers also says giving such a label is 'the easiest way to discredit intelligent design.'<sup>ii</sup> The *New World Encyclopedia* defines Intelligent Design as:

'the view that it is possible to infer from empirical evidence that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection. . . ID relies on scientific evidence rather than on Scripture or religious doctrines. ID makes no claims about biblical chronology, and technically a person does not have to believe in God to infer intelligent design in nature.'<sup>iii</sup>

### The Scientific Method

The scientific method is commonly described as a four-step process involving *observation*, *hypothesis*, *experiments*, and *conclusion*.<sup>iv</sup> Intelligent design is a scientific theory as it determines design through the scientific method. The intelligent design theorist can determine



Are you an accidental byproduct of unguided natural processes without intrinsic value and purpose (as atheists believe) or created by a designer with intrinsic worth and purpose (as theists believe)? I find many reasons to believe that I am not an accidental byproduct of nature but designed with value, dignity, objective meaning, and eternal purpose being made in the image of God.



whether certain features discovered from empirical evidence are the product of chance, necessity (natural law), design, or a combination thereof.

Step 1 (observation): ID begins with observing that intelligent agents produce Complex and Specified Information (CSI). For example, if we see some random letters, ‘hdfmoSsDsxtYcbxpLQq,’ it looks complex but not specified. If we see the information ‘1212121212121212,’ it is specified but not complex. However, if we notice a piece of information, ‘I LOVE MY PARENTS,’ it is complex and specified. Step 2 (hypothesis): The ID theorists hypothesize that it would contain CSI if the natural object were designed. Step 3

(experiment): They perform experiments to see if they can find CSI. Examples of CSI include irreducible complexity (a purposeful arrangement of parts), fine-tuning parameters of the universe, DNA codes, etc. Finally, Step 4 (conclusion): When scientists find CSI through experiments, they conclude that such features were not the product of chance or natural law but were designed.<sup>v</sup>

#### How to Detect Design?

There are multiple methods to detect design. Mathematician and philosopher William Dembski developed an empirical strategy to detect design in nature by using an ‘Explanatory Filter.’<sup>vi</sup> There are

three broad modes of explanation when trying to explain something: *natural law* (or *necessity*), *chance*, and *design*.<sup>vii</sup> The ‘explanatory filter’ asks the following three questions about the thing one tries to explain: Is it *contingent*? Is it *complex*? Is it *specified*? If three questions can answer ‘yes,’ it filters out *necessity* and *chance* and infer *design* as the best explanation. If something is contingent, we may ascribe it to necessity. If something is contingent and complex, we may ascribe it to chance. But if something is contingent, complex, and specified, we must ascribe it to design.

Dembski’s explanatory filter attempts to locate ‘specified complexities’ in the

natural world, pointing to intelligent design. Philosopher Douglas Groothuis presents the structure of the design filter this way:

X is either designed, or the result of chance, or the result of natural law, or the combination of chance and natural law.

X is not the result of chance or natural law or the combination of both.

Therefore: X is the result of design.<sup>viii</sup>

The evidence for intelligent design comes from many areas of science, including physics, cosmology, paleontology, information theory, animal biology, systematics, genetics, cell biology, biochemistry, etc. The ID movement has a growing number of new scientific discoveries from different scientific fields. Although ID has been discovered in many fields, the major discoveries come from physics and cosmology, the origin of life, and biological complexity. I will address an example below.

### DNA Information: Indicating Design

In his book, *Information and the Origin of Life*, biophysicist Bernd-Olaf Koppers pointed out that ‘the problem of the origin of life is clearly basically equivalent to the problem of the origin of biological information.’<sup>ix</sup> Since the late 1950s and 1960s, the origin of life researchers discovered that DNA contains large amounts of genetic information in the form of language. Atheist biologist Richard Dawkins writes, ‘biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.’<sup>x</sup> Software developer Bill Gates said, ‘DNA is like a computer program but far, far more advanced than any software ever created.’<sup>xi</sup>

The living cell contains organic molecules, including proteins, DNA, RNA, lipids, and complex carbohydrates.<sup>xii</sup> DNA contains the information necessary to specify the sequence of the proteins. Intelligent design begins with observing that intelligent agents can produce a large amount of complex and specified information (CSI). In his book, *Signature in the Cell*, philosopher of science Stephen Meyer points out three important

properties which enable DNA to carry information.<sup>xiii</sup> First, the subunits of DNA are like a four-letter alphabet (A, T, G, C) arranged like meaningful sentences that convey a particular message. Second, the information in DNA is extremely complex. Third, the information in the DNA is specified.<sup>xiv</sup>

The information contents in the DNA are complex and specified. As I have presented earlier, specified complexity cannot be formed by chance or necessity (natural law). Therefore, intelligent design is the best explanation for the origin of specified complexity in DNA. I do not have space to deal with objections to the Intelligent Design Argument.

### Philosophical Implication: The Existence of God

Design points to a designer. Obviously, if something is designed, it has a theological implication to find out the designing agent. This requires further philosophical reasoning. The one who is committed to the discipline of philosophy (including me) takes the scientific data and uses reason to make a further argument for the designing agent. From multiple points of view, I would argue that the God of the Bible is the designing agent. This fits well with the biblical claim that God is the creator and designer of the universe. I do not have space to develop this here. Intelligent Design is one of the many arguments for the existence of God without appealing to the special revelation (Bible). In the next issue, I hope to write another argument for the existence of God to make the cumulative case even more robust. ■

### Recommendations:

For Intelligent Design material: Discovery Institute’s, Center for Science and Culture, Seattle, Washington ([www.discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org)).

For Science and Faith topic: Reasons to Believe, ([www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org)).

<sup>i</sup>“What is Intelligent Design?” *Intelligent Design*. Accessed September 05, 2022. <https://intelligentdesign.org/whatisid/>

<sup>ii</sup> John G. West, “Intelligent Design and Creationism Just Aren’t the Same.” *Discovery Institute*. December

01, 2002). Accessed September 05, 2022, <https://www.discovery.org/a/1329/>

<sup>iii</sup>“Intelligent Design.” *New World Encyclopedia*. Accessed September 06, 2022, [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Intelligent\\_design](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Intelligent_design)

<sup>iv</sup> The Center for Science and Culture, “What is the Science Behind Intelligent Design,” *Discovery*, May 01, 2009, Accessed September 06, 2022, <https://www.discovery.org/a/9761/>

<sup>v</sup> Casey Luskin, “Intelligent Design (ID) Has Scientific Merit Because it Uses the Scientific Method to Make its Claims and Infers Design by Testing its Positive Predictions,” *Discovery Institute*, September 8, 2008, Accessed September 06, 2022, <https://www.discovery.org/a/7051/>

<sup>vi</sup> Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics, A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 244.

<sup>vii</sup> William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions About Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 87.

<sup>viii</sup> Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 246.

<sup>ix</sup> Bernd-Olaf Koppers, *Information and the Origin of Life* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 170-72.

<sup>x</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, (England: Penguin Books, 2006), 06.

<sup>xi</sup> Bill Gates, *The Road Ahead*. Rev.ed. (New York: Viking, Penguin Group, 1996), 188.

<sup>xii</sup> Jonathan Wells, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design*, (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2006), 96.

<sup>xiii</sup> Wells, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design*, 96.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.

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**Aby Jacob** was born and raised in Kerala, India. He is currently pursuing an MA in Philosophy and a Certificate in Scientific Apologetics at Southern Evangelical Seminary (USA). He dedicates his life to defending the Christian faith and answering people’s honest questions about God, life, and the world.

SPECIAL

# ALL GO RHYTHM 2022

With India's first multi-city Christian music festival around the corner, **Tania Rose Josun** speaks with **Renoy Sivanandan**, the festival director about how All Go Rhythm came to be.

When Renoy Sivanandhan walked into the music ministry session of a JY family conference, back in 2006, little did he know that he was at the crossroads of destiny. That musical encounter left him with the eagerness to learn music and be up on the stage as the musicians he just saw.

His involvement with the Kerala music ministry saw him grow into his love for music. He learnt to play the guitar – this became 'instrumental' in his full-time mission to Northeast India. In a place where the language was foreign, music broke all barriers and brought many to Christ. The years from 2011 to 2018 were a period when God led him into a deeper understanding of music and its power to evangelise. Renoy says, 'I came to realise that God was showing me a lot of

opportunities to learn and for mission. So slowly, we started building the Kerala music ministry here by 2013. And during this time, the Lord was teaching me a lot of things, not just to perform music, but to organise, how music could make an impact, how to do praise and worship. The Lord was building me as a whole musician during this time.' In 2009, he had initiated one of Jesus Youth's music bands, Vox Christi.

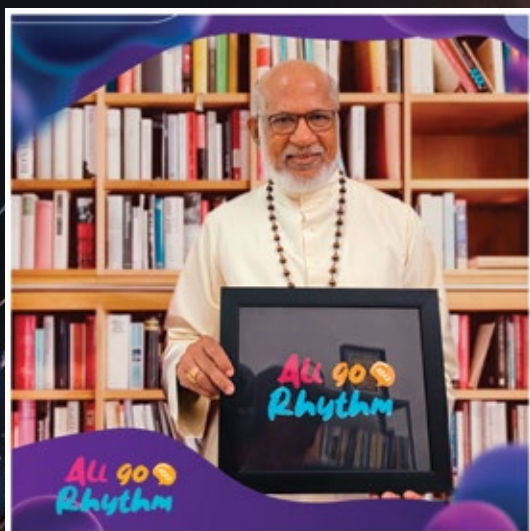
Renoy went on to do his further studies in music from London College of Music, UK. The exposure he received there opened his eyes to the huge possibilities for evangelising through music. Armed with the know-how, a degree in music, and having launched his own company, StringHeads Music, Renoy returned to India.



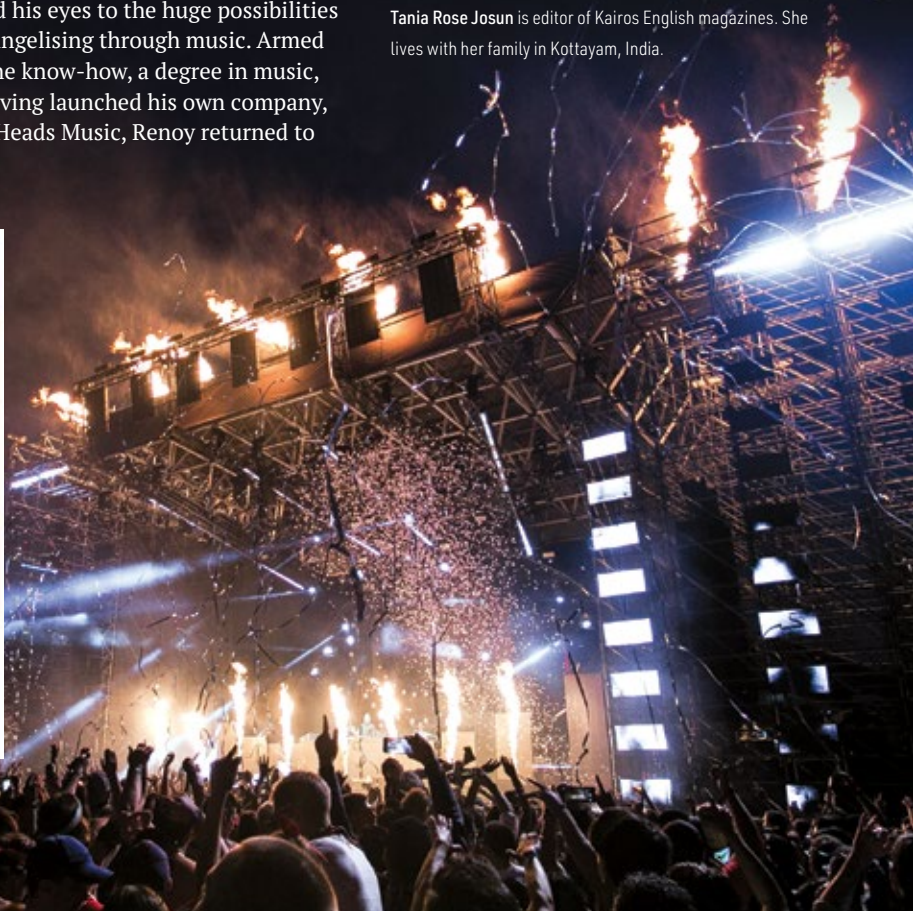
Sixteen years after Renoy's musical encounter, India is set to witness the first-of-its-kind multi-city Christian Musical Festival – All Go Rhythm – the first edition of which will be launched on 26 November 2022 at Bharat Mata College grounds in Cochin, India.

The music festival aims to bring all music lovers to experience faith through music. A stepping platform to faith, it seeks to provide a unique experience to anyone, irrespective of background, to come and enjoy music.

Tania Rose Josun is editor of Kairos English magazines. She lives with her family in Kottayam, India.



All Go Rhythm logo revealed by His Eminence Mar George Cardinal Alencherry.



IN FOCUS



# UPDATE





**Shelton Pinheiro** shares a glimpse of the constant exploration of various areas of interest – part of his ongoing discovery of God’s plan for his life.

# ALERT!

## **Keep up and Keep Moving**

Back in the early 2000s, we were a group of young, inexperienced musicians in the Jesus Youth movement setting out on a journey as a Gospel band, enthused and energised by our encounter with Jesus. Since we were a potpourri of musicians—liking different styles ranging from Carnatic to Rock—the music style that emerged out of our group was a mix of all these, making it one of the first Gospel bands to adopt the fusion style of music that had just begun to come into vogue in the world of music. Over the next few decades, this fusion style would define the music of Rexband.

Somehow, this attitude of constantly exploring the new spaces out there in the context of faith is something that we, like many others, picked up from the Jesus Youth movement. Initiatives like **JOYnet**, an international community networked

through email in the early years of email; or **Jesusyouth.org**, one of the first websites among Catholic movements; and **Youth Vibes**, a podcast from the movement long before podcasts began trending are just a few instances that point to this charism of the movement to constantly seek new dynamics and platforms, even from its very early years.

This wide-eyed, curious, open approach to events, ideas and technology around us, I feel, is a special gift from the movement for us who live in a fast changing world.

## **Finding One’s Space**

Out of the endless spectrum of worlds out there, it is perhaps important to find a few areas that have a resonance and relevance to one’s life, likings and calling. My general interests in life always seemed to converge around music, writing, visuals and design.

And gradually, as I found a career in advertising, these interests seemed to align in a seamless way. So mostly, these are the areas around which I walk about, looking around, finding new avenues and connecting to new friends—curious and excited about what I see and hear.

In time, I saw that these spaces were also linked to the areas in my spiritual journey and the different groups and ministries. Thus I realise that this seeking, finding and constant exploring, is in a sense, part of my ongoing discovery of God's plan in my life.

### Likeminded Friendships

Likeminded, enduring friendships too have played a significant role in enabling me to keep up and keep going, whether in my profession or in my spiritual life. It's something that is embedded in the making of our movement. As I stepped into the world of media and art, more friendships and collectives entered my life. I am grateful for these diverse friendships that are growing as we stay connected through our common, yet diverse interests in poetry, photography, spirituality, music, prayer, advertising, technology and movies. Currently, besides the Jesus Youth households and formation ([jesusyouth.org](http://jesusyouth.org)), I am part of a little friendship circle called Exodus ([exodus90.com](http://exodus90.com)) that has been helping me to firmly ground myself in living the faith every day.

### Eyes Open Wide

The world of visuals today is definitely too vast for the eye to take in. With YouTube and the OTT platforms, the space literally explodes with content. Yet there are certain themes, treatments, directors and ideas that I seek out and bookmark in the mind. It's true that no one can have a comprehensive perspective of the entire visual world. Yet as we are many, and with different sensibilities, we can seek out and share projects and works that speak to our heart and bolster our convictions.

Here are some spaces that I check out. The first one is on contemporary media

I remember the programmes and training in Jesus Youth where young people studied the documents of the Church, debated issues over tea and prayed together. Perhaps these were the first triggers that sparked off a desire in me to understand our world and think about it in relation to faith. Later entering the worlds of literature, poetry, advertising and media, this need for knowing and learning grew proportionately.





culture and the next two are popular review sites.

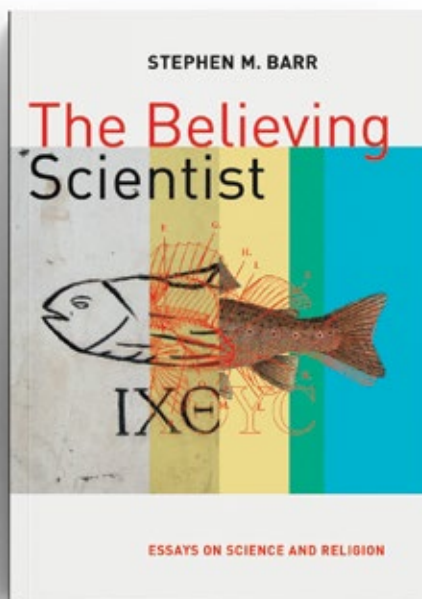
- 🌐 [www.uproxx.com](http://www.uproxx.com)
- 🌐 [www.catholicreview.org](http://www.catholicreview.org)
- 🌐 [www.rogerebert.com](http://www.rogerebert.com)

### The Writing on the Wall

Reading is one space that I constantly dip into—amidst the day and across schedules. Over the years I've moved from printed books to Kindle and back. Now it's both—and I read on whatever is accessible whenever that little break comes up during the day. I usually read through a set of books simultaneously and keep alternating between them.

A recent set:

- ▶ *A Book of Luminous Things* - Czeslaw Milosz
- ▶ *Christ is Passing By* - Josemaria Escriva
- ▶ *Life of the Mind* - Christine Smallwood
- ▶ *Virtues* - Romano Guardini
- ▶ *Believing Scientist - Essays on Science*



- ▶ *and Religion* - Stephen M Barr
- ▶ *Paper Aeroplane* - Simon Armitage

### Ears Perked Up

Just as the band that I belong to, my taste in music is generally eclectic, perhaps with a personal bias towards acoustic, blues, R&B and a bit of jazz. The same genres more or less play out in my Gospel music listening too.

A sample of my general playlist ranges from the young talented Arlo Parks to classic blues.

🌐 <https://tinyurl.com/4rfx4tsb>

This is a mixed bag for people who ask for a starter pack for international contemporary Christian music.

🌐 <https://tinyurl.com/2p8a2cba>

One of my go to lists of current worship songs, compiled by Manoj Sunny.

🌐 <https://tinyurl.com/4n8f8td5>

And some Rexband music.

🌐 <https://tinyurl.com/35vn9t79>

### Mindware

I remember the programmes and training in Jesus Youth where young people studied the documents of the Church, debated issues over tea and prayed together. Perhaps these were the first triggers that sparked off a desire in me to understand our world and think about it in relation to faith. Later entering the

worlds of literature, poetry, advertising and media, this need for knowing and learning grew proportionately. Besides, with constant discussions at home or in office and the influence of the omnipresent social media, the need to make sense and find bearings has now come to the fore like never before.

Speakers like Bishop Barron are quick to address issues that are trending. Check out this one about Space and Religion <https://youtu.be/UURSfvRGtl>. In fact, I heard a few youth in a recent Jesus Youth prayer group ask similar questions about space, cosmos and God. In recent times I have begun to prefer podcasts over videos – perhaps because of the tiring visual overload. The trend seems to be catching on as

podcast listeners in the US are expected to touch 100 million in 2024 (source: [grandviewresearch.com](http://grandviewresearch.com)).

Some interesting spaces:

Podcasts:

- ▶ *Word On Fire-Bishop Barron*
- ▶ *The Wired Podcast*
- ▶ *Jeff Cavins*
- ▶ *The BBC Verb*
- ▶ *The Bible in a Year with Fr. Mike*
- ▶ *Homilies with Richard Rohr*
- ▶ *Monocle on Design*
- ▶ *The Poetry Magazine Podcast*

Websites:

- 🌐 [themarginalian.org](http://themarginalian.org)
- 🌐 [poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org)
- 🌐 [fransiscanmedia.org](http://fransiscanmedia.org)
- 🌐 [taize.fr](http://taize.fr)

This is just a little snapshot of the larger spaces out there—and a tiny reminder to myself, to keep moving. ■■

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An executive creative director of an advertising agency, Shelton Pinheiro, is also the coordinator of Rexband. He lives in Cochin, India with his wife Anu and their two daughters.

**M**y journey, from not being able to draw a mango in my first standard to head a creative agency as Creative Director, has been filled with God's blessings and his immense grace.

From the beginning, it was a challenge for me to do basic drawing. Most of the children in my class were good at it. My weakness disappointed me for a while but I was inquisitive about why I was unable to do such a simple task, so I started observing things and nature around me. Soon I developed an observant eye towards my surroundings. This gradually helped me develop my skill of art to a level where I was the most sought after student in school for any art related task. I won first position in many intra and inter-school art competitions.

I realised that God had blessed me with the gift of creativity and always sought his direction in delving deeper into the world of art and creativity. Whenever I wanted to try or create something extraordinary, I

# A Paintbrush for God

Kairos Global's designer, **Ashish Rozario** talks of his journey from a first-grader unable to draw to head of a creative agency.



always sought his inspiration and excelled in it. That is how I decided to pursue applied arts and make it my career.

In spite of my substandard final grades, I never lost hope in the providence of God but kept on praying for his grace and blessings for my future. My parents were really worried about me. Those days of uncertainty were the best days of my relationship with Jesus. I learnt how to surrender myself completely into the hands of Jesus, just keep calm, work hard and wait patiently for him to act. This verse from the Bible opened my eyes towards true faith in God, *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see* (Hebrews 11:1).

God's promises granted me peace and later an unexpected job offer in one of the most prestigious media agencies of the country, the India Today Group. It was a pleasant surprise for my family and even me to see this chapter of my life unfolding. It truly proved the providence of God.

Since I was self-taught in this field and had no formal education in communication design, I initially felt naive at work, but I always surrendered my work and knowledge to Jesus in prayer before I started any project, which helped me get inspiration and make my work stand out. My work got recognised by many top and influential professionals within the media community. I always strived to deliver the highest quality of work by

and widened my horizons. Later I went on to work with several reputed media firms and advertising agencies to direct and execute a plethora of creatives ranging from magazine design, premium photo-books, cover and editorial photography, product design, corporate branding, to design trainings, lectures, talent building, music production, video production, and so on...

The more I let go of myself and let God take control, the more he helped me excel in every field of creativity. All the knowledge that I have gained today is because of the grace of God, he kept my childhood trait of keen observation alive even today.

This confidence and trust in God's providence has helped me to establish a creative agency through which we now provide a wide range of creative services panning visual and aural communications. One has to keep on striving and have an open mind to learn more every day to achieve perfection in one's professional and spiritual life.

I firmly believe we should offer our skills, talents, knowledge, efforts and spirituality to God as our gifts/prayers to him so that he can take control and make us grow in them and in his love, that he can refine us to make us like gold.

Matthew 25:14-30 tells us how God expects us to work on our talents and use them for the glory of God irrespective of the nature of talent, skill, gender, age, knowledge, etc., so that we receive more from him and value his love for us, *For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance* (Matthew 25:29).

This has been my driving force and the reason to achieve the best for the One who is the best of the best. Now when I look back and count my blessings, I realise how God has multiplied my one talent to more than forty different talents of creativity. Which is why I always remind myself to remain just a paintbrush in the hands of God so that he can create his masterpiece. ■

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Ashish Rozario is a creative director with Mustard Tree. A passionate cook, lives in Delhi, India with his wife and two children. Also the co-founder and music director with the Jesus Youth band - 'Acts of the apostles'.

## FOR TO EVERYONE WHO HAS WILL MORE BE GIVEN, AND HE WILL HAVE AN ABUNDANCE

(Matthew 25:29)

whatever means possible. I never cut corners to complete my work, and always aimed for perfection. For me, my work was a form of prayer offering to Jesus who gave me the knowledge and provided for all that I needed.

Till date I follow the same philosophy of work. I prefer starting my work with a blank canvas without any reference or template, I let him take control of my senses. I draw parallels here with spirituality where one needs to empty one's heart and mind from presumptions, disturbances, worries, anxieties and leave space for God to take control and work wonders in your life.

As I surrendered more of myself, my talents and my constant hard work to God, he gradually multiplied them, opened my mind to grasp more



S T A Y I N G  
U P D A T E D A N D  
E M P O W E R E D



**What does it mean to be updated  
and how does one remain updated?  
Angela Nayak has the answer.**

## 'Does being updated mean a dismissal of awareness of the old?'

The answer is a 'no' especially when what is old is true in its very essence, because truth never changes! It is the same yesterday, today and forever.

**M**ore than a decade ago, I remember walking into the local St Paul's book store and picking up a black book, titled *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I wrote my name on it, covered it with a sheet of plastic and I forgot all about it until the 2020 lockdown.

So why am I sharing this?!

Because it took me that long to realise that there are sufficient resources I can use to be updated even in matters of faith.

So anyway, what does it mean to be updated and how does one remain updated?

To be updated means to be aware of the newest, 'means' or 'ideas'. And we can all agree that the best newest means to stay updated is 'technological advancement'. The more smarter the phones and devices, the more access we can have to a plethora of apps, blogs, podcasts, videos, etc., and the more access we have to these, the more updated we can be as to what is happening around the world or as to what is trending on the runway this winter or even with regards to the Holy Father's views on global affairs. The newest means and the newest ideas are in our hands! So it is no longer a task to remain updated or to be aware of the newest.

What really needs to be addressed is 'Does being updated mean a dismissal of awareness of the old?'

And the answer is a 'no' especially when what is old is true in its very essence, because truth never changes! It is the same yesterday, today and forever. Being updated with the old is as important as with the new, because

it enables us to recognise the truth, which is more easily blurred now than ever before.

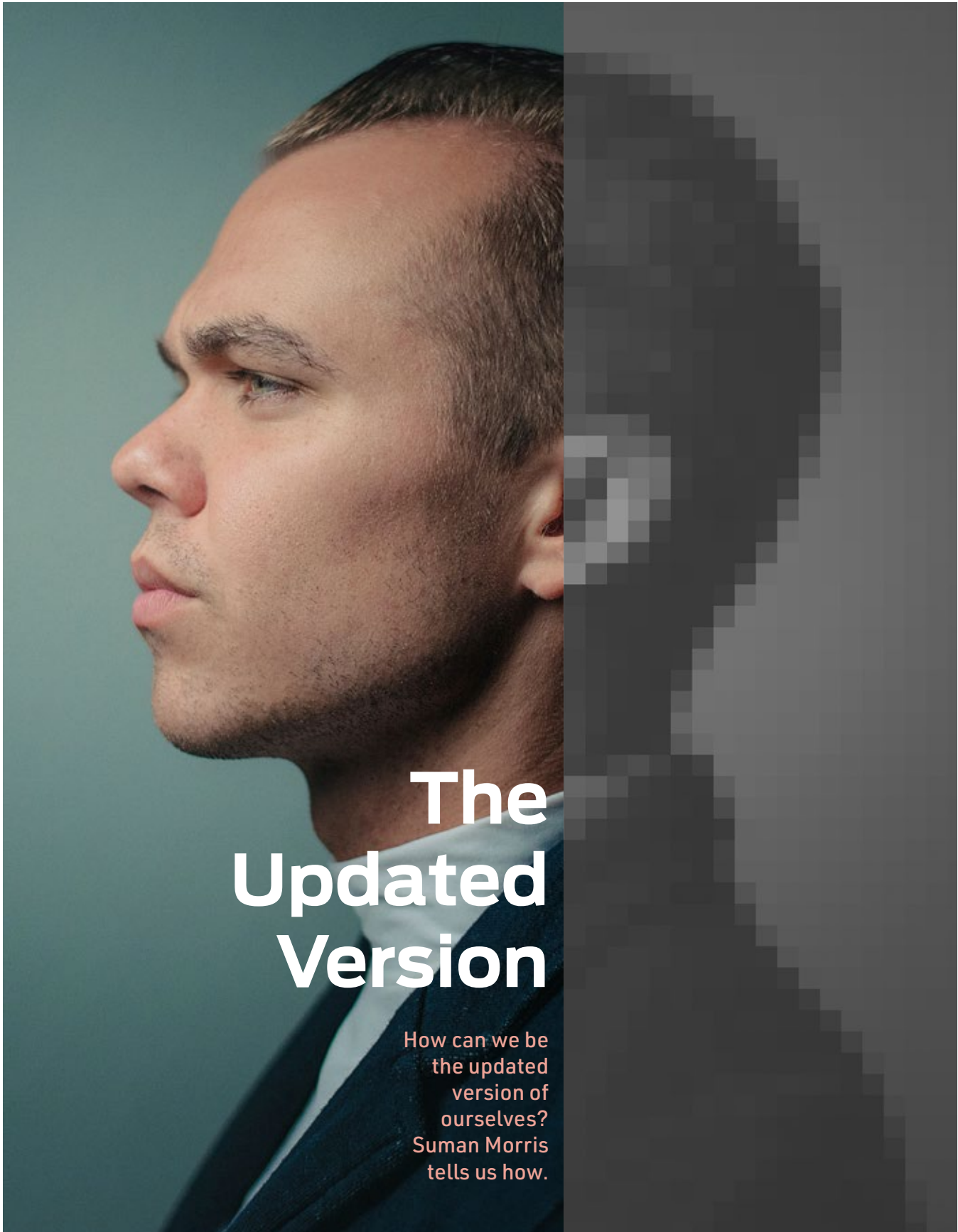
Life has four significant facets, personal, social, professional and spiritual and each of these require that one not **only** learns what is new and progresses, but **also** unlearns some of what is new in the light of the old and stays guarded. So if it is imperative for a grandparent, who was born in the 20th century to learn how to use WhatsApp and increase familial communication, it is equally imperative for a 21st century adolescent to unlearn how to use screen-time and prioritise their health. Likewise, in 2022, reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and gaining an insight into respect for human life—the teaching of an over 2000-year-old Church, puts an adult like myself in a better position to defend my stand with say a 21st century young adult who defends the right to pro-choice.

And it is in this very sense that I think of the spiritual facet as the stream from which all the other facets receive nourishment. Staying updated in the spiritual helps shape

and ground my words, thoughts and deeds in my personal, social and professional areas of life. Whatever the newest, if I am also updated with the oldest, I am in the best position to discern for or against the waves of change.

So yes! It may have taken longer for me to realise that there are sufficient resources I can use to be updated, but it is better late than never. I try and use both old and new means to remain updated on both old and new ideas. I use my smartphone, the internet and social media to learn from a mix of witnesses/bloggers/vloggers/speakers/apologists. I tune into debates and discussions over YouTube. I use my Kindle account to read from a list of authors. Sometimes I use apps to read Sacred Scripture. I buy books to educate myself on history and tradition. I talk to fellow faithful to expose myself to different viewpoints. And most of all, I try to live a life of sacraments, as it empowers me to stay faithful to the truth in all areas of life. ■

An Assistant Professor of mass communication and journalism, **Angela Nayak** lives in Hyderabad, India.



# The Updated Version

How can we be the updated version of ourselves? Suman Morris tells us how.



**H**ave you ever thought of the word ‘update’? It is the incorporation of new information or trends. But the narrow view is to make a newer version. For example, when it comes to software, cars, phones there is always an update in a version. In software, the present version is updated to a newer version.

Now the big question? Am I updated in my spiritual, personal and professional areas of my life? Take a moment and think about it. About our versions? Baby, toddler, adolescence, adult and old age. We all must go through the cycle of life. But again, the question is, is it just about growth in the physical and mental aspects or about spiritual growth as well? Am I updated?

Before going to the question of how, let’s discuss why we need to be updated? Easy the why, easier the how.

We all differentiate our lives into various aspects like personal, professional, spiritual and they are further divided into happiness, faith, career, goals, etc. But what about the whole; the complete you? The interconnection between all these aspects? That is where the new version emerges – the updated YOU. All these aspects are integrated with the holistic approach, having a balance, and becoming a newer version of ourselves. And now HOW do we become our new versions?

With the help of The BIBLE – our source to know Jesus, the Son of the Living God. Jesus too referred to the Scriptures while speaking to the crowd, to Pharisees and Scribes, and even to the Devil during his fast. We as his disciples need to imbibe this quality. You may think how is this an update?

Now that we know our source – the Bible – the platforms can vary. It can be our workplace, or an online platform where we share our ideas/views in religious or non-religious aspects, in an NGO that helps the poor or the needy, a project at work, or anything. The Bible can give the answers and keep us grounded to the Truth of Life. A lot of information, perspectives, ideologies, theories, etc. are either being misinterpreted or used wrongly for one’s own interest. Therefore, by using the Bible as our foundation, we will be able to distinguish between right and wrong, from truth and false. That is one of the major reasons why many young people fall trap to FOMO (fear of missing out), go into depression, feel unloved/not liked, or procrastinate. Just by seeing a few pictures/videos on social media, they feel sad not being part of it. But truth to be told, we do not miss anything if we live in our present (the gift that God has given us). Such feelings can be controlled the moment we know how much God loves his children.

Even by taking just the first commandment – ‘I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before me’ – in the present day, we don’t find people looking for new gods, but you see beliefs such as ‘Work is Worship,’ where some leave everything to pursue their dreams, forgetting their family and spiritual life. But here is where balance must be made. We as Christians should work hard and glorify Christ through our work and at the same time spend time with family and work for the society. During tough times and in troubles we need to stay in faith and surrender it to the Lord. As the Scriptures promise in Jeremiah 29:11, Deuteronomy 8:18, Philippians 4:19, etc. God promises to give us riches, success and more through Christ. Taking the lives of Joseph, David, and Daniel, we see that God had taken them from a humble background to a place of authority and

**The integration of spiritual, professional, and personal can be done by taking an analogy of a tree – stronger the roots (spiritual life) grounded to the earth (Christ), the stronger the stem/trunk (personal life/character), better are the leaves/flowers (professional life, career) and the fruits (achievements/success).**

they always stayed grounded to God.

In the present day, we can stay spiritual and work towards our mission of proclaiming the Good News of God by using platforms such as, YouTube – watching Mass every day (when we aren’t able to attend physically); via webinars to discuss our ideas and doubts related to our religion (none of us have all the information or tools to deal with present day issues but such platforms can be very helpful to build our sense of understanding). Joining our church’s retreats, liturgy meetings, being part of the church’s groups to build the Church into a better place; by propagating our mission to proclaim the Good News through Jesus Youth – where every youth in their own way proclaims Jesus is the Lord and Saviour and building a better society.

The integration of spiritual, professional, and personal can be done by taking an analogy of a tree – stronger the roots (spiritual life) grounded to the earth (Christ), the stronger the stem/trunk (personal life/character), better are the leaves/flowers (professional life, career) and the fruits (achievements/success). As Catholics, we need to be a better disciple (student) of Christ by not just words but through our actions that proclaim we are the children of GOD. Many issues of the present day such as suicides, rape, depression, murder, hatred, which surround the society like a fog can be removed by just being a good student of Christ, a best version of ourselves. The updated version. ■■



# A Higher Calling

**Aby Jacob** speaks about his desire to faithfully accomplish what God has willed for his life.

Since accepting Christ as my Lord and Savior at the age of twenty-four, my thirst for a deeper knowledge of God and my desire for spiritual growth has never stopped. Therefore, I did not take things lightly. Three practices – serious Bible reading, self-examination, and prayer – became part of my regular life. Intense Bible reading and reflection help me to gain more profound knowledge and wisdom of God. Self-examination helps me discover where I need corrections to grow in Christ.

Along with Bible reading and self-examination, a disciplined prayer life keeps me connected to the Triune God. It gives me the power to turn away from evil and sinful ways and overcome worldly desires and temptations. I always need to be humble and rely on God for spiritual growth, which is impossible without his grace, forgiveness, love, and continuous filling of the Holy Spirit. These three regular practices also strengthen me to be a bold witness to the truth without fear and shame and to swim against today's secular tides.

Moreover, I am thankful to be part of a church community where they teach the Word of God without infiltrating worldly ideologies. They also bring the truth into practice without compromising the purity of the Word. It is easy to go with the secular flow, but one needs to love and honour the truth above everything to stay separate in holiness and to go against the flow.

I learned that the existence of God is undeniable and that he brought everything into existence for an eternal purpose. Undoubtedly, everything in this world, such as health, wealth, beauty, position, power, etc., will not last long. The only thing that will last is the Word of God. While I do not think there is anything wrong with having such things in this world if they are properly used, I always try to ensure that my mind does not get attached to anything more than God. As a young man, just like many others, I also had great things and opportunities that



### A QUICK ADVICE TO YOUTH

Life on the earth is short. Do not waste all your time and energy chasing after material things, money, power, position, fame, etc. In the end, all of them will fade away. Instead, focus on things above, that which lasts forever. Always remember to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness [Matthew 6:33]. If your life does not get filled with God all the time, Satan can easily fill your life with things of this world. To know God deeply, you should pick up your Bible. Then, with prayer, read the Word of God to know Christ deeply until the pages of your Bible start to fall off. Then fix it or get a new copy and repeat. Listen to God's Word, turn to the truth, examine your life, turn away from sin, discipline your life to keep all unnecessary distractions and busyness away, keep holiness, maintain a life of prayer, be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission, enjoy God's presence, and glorify him through your life in words and good works.

I could boast about. However, I realised those are not as great as knowing God, growing in the knowledge of God, and standing for the truth.

God made the truth evident to me. He also called me for a particular mission to commit my life to Christian apologetics and true philosophy with the message of the cross of Christ. When I sensed this higher calling to serve him, I humbled before the Lord. As Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 3:7-8, 12-14, I was more than happy to give up many things that were gain to me. My desire is to faithfully accomplish the mission that God entrusted to me until he calls me to the everlasting home prepared for those who are saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

People find their greatest pleasure in what they worship and love the most. My greatest pleasure comes from my relationship with the triune God, whom I worship and love more than anything else. To experience such a life consistently, I put a lot of effort in the first place to keep out of all unnecessary distractions and busyness in this world.

I embrace what is true, good, and beautiful. I realised that sometimes managing good things in life is more difficult than turning away from bad things. We often fail to notice the danger of unnecessarily losing a lot of time on many good things that are not always so necessary. So, I had to develop good principles and discipline to keep distractions and busyness away. I try not to allow unnecessary events and material things. I value friendships and relationships highly but do not try to please everyone by approving or engaging in every good thing they bring forth. I always make sure that my closer ones know my discipline so that they do not feel offended when I have to refuse some events kindly.

Disciplining my life to manage my routine helps me maintain a life without unnecessary distractions and busyness. This discipline, in turn, allows me to focus on the most important things and maintain a mature Christian life of experiencing the highest form of pleasure from my eternal relationship with the Triune God. ■

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**Aby Jacob** was born and raised in Kerala, India. He is currently pursuing an MA in Philosophy and a Certificate in Scientific Apologetics at Southern Evangelical Seminary (USA). He dedicates his life to defending the Christian faith and answering people's honest questions about God, life, and the world.

# CONTINUOUS GROWTH IS INTEGRAL TO LIFE

Former Chief Secretary of the state of Andhra Pradesh, **Minnie Mathew** writes about change, personal growth and unwavering hope in Christ.

It has been famously said that in any given moment we have two options – either to step forward into growth or step back into safety. By nature I was happy to be in my comfort zone surrounded by familiar people and objects. My inner voice used to tell me that this comfort zone was acting as a deterrent to my personal growth and development. Yet I was disinclined to take the road less travelled and leave what I was comfortable with.

However all this changed when I joined the Indian Administrative Service at the age of 23. For me it was a bungee jump into the deep unknown and I was totally unprepared for the challenges that were thrown at me. Having cleared a tough all Indian level competitive examination, I had a legitimate expectation that I could put my feet up and relax. I couldn't have been more naïve. Beginning with the compulsory horse riding classes and controlling unruly horses on the riding ground (horses which had an uncanny

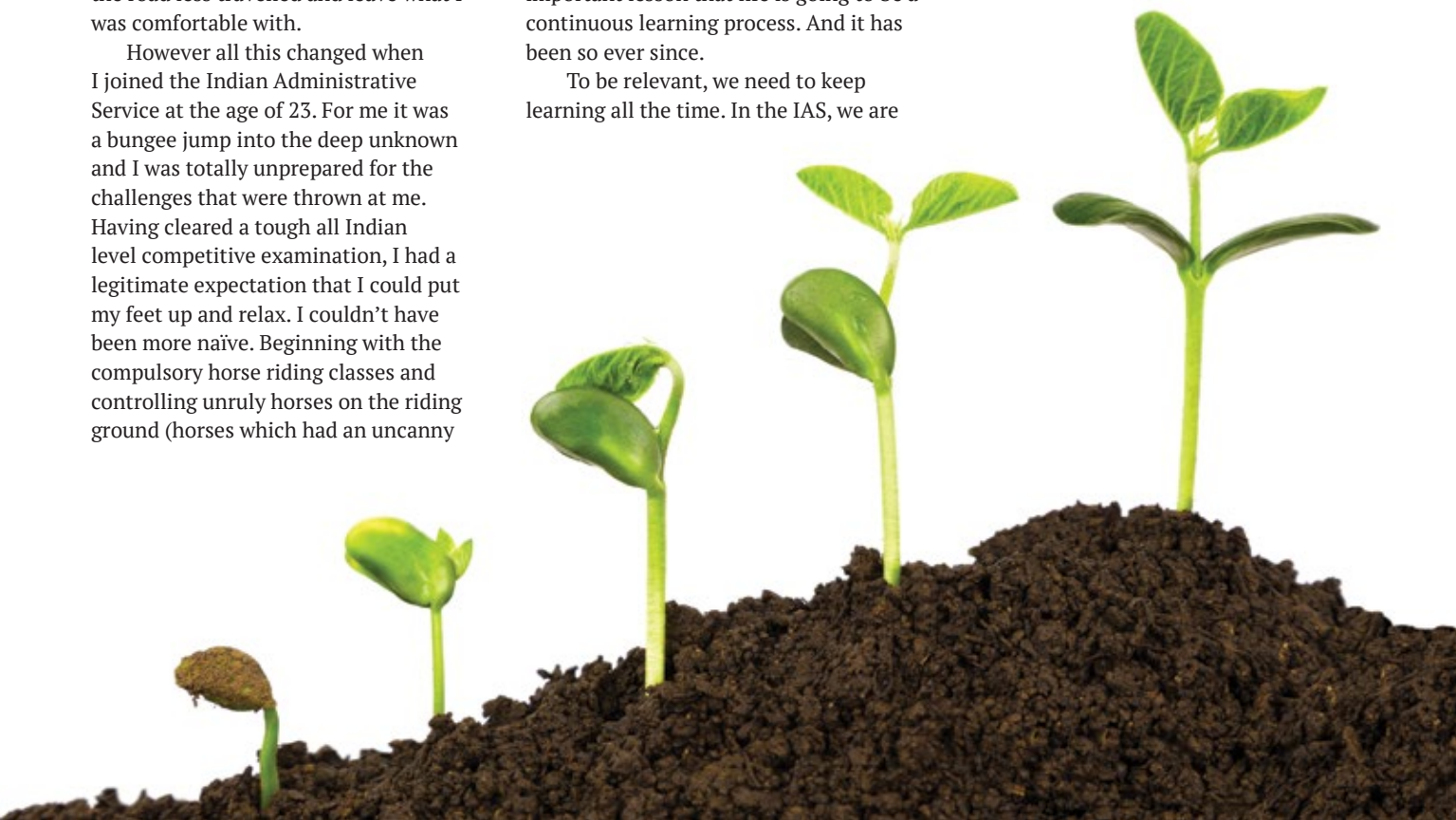
way of detecting and teasing nervous riders) to *Shramdan* (voluntary physical labour) in the early morning rain and mist of Mussoorie, the 'queen of the hills' in India, and grappling with law, the constitution, economics, and the new language of the state to which I was allotted, group discussions, village visits, treks – life became one big roller coaster ride. But all of this taught me the important lesson that life is going to be a continuous learning process. And it has been so ever since.

To be relevant, we need to keep learning all the time. In the IAS, we are

tasked to handle a variety of jobs ranging from agriculture, rural development, education, health, development of women, development of weaker sections, housing, etc. Thus we wear many hats. We are periodically sent for refresher courses, in-service programmes and are encouraged to acquire professional qualifications and specializations.

But learning does not come from academic courses or books alone. I have learnt on the job and I have also learnt a lot from my seniors, my peers and my subordinates who gave great insights into 'the nuts and bolts issues' of administration and ground realities.

The world keeps evolving at a mind blowing speed. Therefore what worked for me at the start of my career was clearly not enough as the years rolled by. When I entered service more than four decades ago, the pace was more measured and calibrated. As a Sub Collector, I could plan my week and, to a large extent, accomplish what was planned, mainly because there was a certain predictability about everything. To give a small example – unlike the sudden cloudbursts and flash floods which are a regular feature today, there used to be a definite time of the



year when we could expect the arrival of cyclones and consequential floods and gear up the entire machinery for evacuation of the vulnerable population and carry out relief operations.

Further the sphere of work was also fairly limited. As such there was time to grow oneself personally and professionally. But with the advancement of technology, explosion of information on the internet, the plethora of government programmes, and the participatory nature of programme implementation, it was necessary to become more tech savvy and develop skills to strengthen our outreach to the common man who represented the face of the new aspirational India.

In short, we never 'arrive'. We are always 'works in progress' evolving according to the demands of the day. Every situation – good or bad – is a teacher. Very often, bad experiences help to hone our skills better and update our knowledge and ability to deliver, provided we retain the desire to be learning continuously.

### PERSONAL GROWTH

On the personal front, growth and improvement takes place at various levels. We cross an important benchmark when we do what is right by moral choice rather than compulsion. In other words, even when nobody is watching or monitoring us we should naturally do the right thing. Sometimes it is much easier to go with the flow rather than face alienation and isolation by taking a principled stand on issues to which you attach importance. My experience has been that we may face temporary setbacks and sometimes become very unpopular. But time will prove us right and we will stand vindicated in the long run.

So, how can we know whether we are growing? When we show courage to be a lone voice in the wilderness, we grow. We grow when we start checking whether others are growing along with us. Interdependence is the leitmotif of our existence. The pandemic has taught

**In short, we never 'arrive'. We are always 'works in progress' evolving according to the demands of the day. Every situation – good or bad – is a teacher. Very often, bad experiences help to hone our skills better and update our knowledge and ability to deliver, provided we retain the desire to be learning continuously.**

us that 'nobody is safe until everybody is safe.' So while we grow we need to check if others are also growing with us or whether we are growing at their expense. We grow when we become connectors capable of celebrating differences and highlighting the commonalities that exist. We grow when we make the world a better place, one day at a time. For this we need to pause, introspect and reflect in solitude at the end of the day whether we have been a little bit kinder, a little bit more helpful and empathetic, a little bit gentler than the day before.

Personal growth and improvement is very important as it acts as force multiplier making spillovers into all other facets of life.

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We live today in an ethical wasteland. There is a humongous ethical deficit all around us. The goal is important but the means to achieve the goal are unimportant. In our spiritual journey there can be no compromise in this regard. For us the means should be as important as the end. To help us grow spiritually, we need to have a deep and loving relationship with God. We also need to manifest that love through service to our fellow beings.

There are some important indicators to measure our spiritual growth. We grow spiritually when we can feel the presence of God in every circumstance of life – whether it be good times or hard times.

We need to hold on to hope in Christ in unwavering prayer when all the odds are against us. Prayer gives you strength to go forward and open the doors which are seemingly shut. Most importantly we need to hold on to faith and believe that all things are possible as promised in Philippians 4:13 and Luke 1:37.

When I was heading a mining company, there was an incident of a cheque bouncing case going against my company in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. This would have caused a great financial loss to the company. So I rushed to the Supreme Court and met with the advocate who prepared an appeal to be filed on the next day. Our advocate was particularly busy on that day and was unsure as to whether he would be able to appear on our behalf. If he had failed to appear, the case would have been dismissed by default. As I was sitting in the court hall watching the proceedings of the day, my heart sank because the Bench of Judges was in a very stern mood and had summarily dismissed all the 21 cases which were listed before my case. Our case was about to be called and there was no trace of my advocate. I kept repeating 'For with God nothing is impossible,' and just as our case was called, our advocate walked in. He put forth his arguments neatly and succinctly and ours was the first case in which a stay of the orders of the High court was granted. Later on, we won the case too. There are innumerable such cases where God has upheld me with his right hand.

Growth, change and renewal are integral to life. Nature shows us that what is in bloom today ceases to exist tomorrow and that continuous change and renewal constitute one of the most important universal laws. At every stage we have opportunities to grow. As George Eliot puts it 'It is never too late to be what you might have been.' ■■

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**Minnie Mathew** is a retired IAS officer who served for 37 years, handling a variety of assignments in diverse sectors. She was the first woman District Collector of Hyderabad, and the second woman to have held the post of Chief Secretary of the composite state of Andhra Pradesh.

SPORTS

# Anchored in

# Faith



From the heavenly heights of Atlanta 1996 to the depths of despair in the Sydney Olympics, the fall was steep. It would have crushed lesser mortals beyond repair but not Alloysius Valentine Edwards. His faith, built on a firm foundation, didn't falter, his love for the game of sticks and wits didn't dim, nor was he willing to give up. **A. Joseph Antony** writes about Alloysius Edwards' faith-filled Olympic journey.



**REVVING UP:** Alloysius in goal-keeping and protective gear, all set to take his place under the bar

**PUPPY LOVE:** On a cool evening in Ambala; Punjab gave Alloysius jobs, team captaincy, dignity and honour which he didn't get in his home state of AP/Telangana

**A**lloysius' Catholic faith blossomed when serving Mass at St John Maria Vianney Church, Bhoiguda, situated close to the sprawling Secunderabad railway station. He was also altar boy at the Home for the Aged run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, in the same locality, then inhabited largely by the Anglo-Indian community that he belongs to.

After the Holy Eucharist, a kettle of coffee, 'reserved for Alloysius,' awaited the youngster. He would then wheel a trolley to the rooms of the elderly inmates and serve them breakfast. His attachment to St Anthony grew from childhood innocence—relishing the buns handed out after the Tuesday novena at the Mettuguda shrine. In time, the bond with the powerful intercessor would only grow stronger, right through repeated rejections from the hockey establishment that eventually wrecked his career.

His first foray into competitive sports took off from a close shave with death. In April 1980, he was cycling to the Goshamahal stadium for a selection trial to pick the Andhra Pradesh team for the sub-junior national football championship. Knocked down by a truck, he rolled over in the nick of time to avoid being run over. His chin required 15 stitches.

In October, Alloysius decided to give hockey a shot. With goal-keeping pads borrowed from his neighbour Francis Xavier, he was chosen for the junior nationals at Jabalpur. There was no looking back thereon. His soccer skills helped him use his feet effectively in hockey, especially in stopping the ball, crucial since he became the one-man last line of defence.

During the 1988 Bombay Gold Cup tournament, Alloysius attracted attention



**MR GEORGIA TECH, I PRESUME ??** : Alloysius gets framed for posterity with the statue of George C. Griffin, 'the most beloved person in the history of Georgia Tech,' (short form for Georgia Institute of Technology), where the Indian team stayed during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics

nation-wide after he won the best goal-keeper award. So impressed was Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) Secretary General K L Passi that he drafted the 19-year-old in the camp for the upcoming Seoul Olympics. Strangely, the Hyderabad lad didn't find a place for the quadrennial extravaganza and was left out again four years later from the national squad for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Alloysius took that first blow on the chin and his head remained unbowed even after the next. He then attended a camp in Bangalore to prepare for the Indira Gandhi Tournament at Lucknow that would feature the world's hockey elite including Holland and Australia.

While attending the camp in Kengeri, in the Garden City's outskirts then, one day he walked into St Anthony's Church, Brigade Road. He picked up a miniature statue of the revered Franciscan saint, besides two prayer books. The statuette would remain a constant companion on his travels to all corners of the world thereafter.

In the years to come, his lion-hearted displays seemed reserved for the big stage. Such were his exploits during the Indira Gandhi Tournament that he received job offers from Punjab, the power-house of Indian hockey. Wisely, he refused all of them till he was presented an officer's role. Sadly, many sportspersons, in their anxiety for employment, grab the first offer that comes and languish later in lower level positions.

International tours began with the USSR in 1990. In the 1994 Sydney World Cup, India finished fifth. An expensive watch presented to him by his best friend and teammate Jude Felix Sebastian went missing after a match. An appeal went to his favourite St Anthony, patron of lost articles. Sure enough, the device that would glow in the dark, a novelty then, was duly found.

A test series against Malaysia followed. The highpoint of Alloysius' goalkeeping prowess came in the 1995 Champions Trophy in Berlin, where he made some

**A WALK INTO TOWN:**

Flanked by Rahul Singh (left), A.B. Subbaiah (right) on a stroll through Atlanta during the Olympics

**IN-FLIGHT CONFERENCE:**

With C.S. Poonacha (left), Gavin Ferreira (right) enroute to Berlin for the 1995 Champions Trophy

**BREAK FROM THE HOT**

**SEAT:** Alloysius takes off his helmet for a breather from his custodian duties and his position that's pivotal to the course of a match

*AFTER THE HOLY EUCHARIST. A KETTLE OF COFFEE. RESERVED FOR ALLOYSIUS. AWAITED THE YOUNGSTER. HE WOULD THEN WHEEL A TROLLEY TO THE ROOMS OF THE ELDERLY INMATES AND SERVE THEM BREAKFAST. HIS ATTACHMENT TO ST ANTHONY GREW FROM CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE- RELISHING THE BUNS HANDED OUT AFTER THE TUESDAY NOVENA AT THE METTUGUDA SHRINE.*

splendid saves against host Germany and Pakistan.

Elevated to the captaincy of the country for the Sultan Azlan Shah tournament in Ipoh, Malaysia, Alloysius donned the mantle of leadership with aplomb. Since there was no let-up in the consistency of his performance in the Four-Nation tournament in Australia, his selection for the Atlanta Olympics was a foregone conclusion.

After two earlier attempts at the 1988 Seoul and 1992 Barcelona Olympics were aborted by the powers that be, Alloysius found the Atlanta experience exhilarating. It was the centennial edition of the world's mostly widely watched sports spectacle and the perks and privileges came with them. The Olympic flame was lit by the legendary Muhammed Ali, at one time the world's greatest boxer and a hero for Alloysius.

Indian hockey's custodian and his friends were left wide-eyed when watching the Dream Team, the greatest basketball squad on the planet. Among the highest paid professional sportsmen, the hoopsters would not stay in the Olympic Games Village, set up at the

Radio, Refrigerators, and  
[Continued from page 121]  
sample variation: www





**ROOMIES/LEGENDS:** Catching some TV action with former Indian captain Mohd. Riaz (left) during the 1994 World Cup hockey tournament in Sydney, Australia

**CHAK DE INDIA:** With Mir Ranjan Negi (right), former Indian goal-keeper associated with the super-hit Hindi film

Georgia Institute of Technology, popularly known as Georgia Tech. Instead they made their own arrangement in star hotels in the lap of luxury.

Alloysius also bumped into all-time tennis great Monica Seles, when she dropped in at a food court beside the block housing the Indian contingent at the Games Village. He was bowled over by how lightly she wore her phenomenal success and celebrity status, minus airs or ego. In an era well before mobile phones, his teammate and good friend Gavin Ferreira, one of India's highest scorers at Atlanta, captured the duo on camera.

So filled with gratitude to God for giving him such an opportunity, Alloysius and his family made a pilgrimage to Velankanni on his return. In an act of thanksgiving, Alloysius, his son and devout wife (who backs him up with prayer when he's away from home, for work, competitions, or travel), who had knee-length hair, had their heads tonsured.

By the turn of the millennium, in one of the greatest tragedies of Indian sports, Alloysius would become the most unwitting victim of vicious back-room politics. The unkindest cut to his career came in 2000. Selected for the Indian team to the Sydney Olympics, he even

received the Indian team blazer, with his name stitched into a sleeve for identification.

He was also in the month-long camp at Brisbane for acclimatisation in the run-up to the Olympics. On the last day, a trial was held to pick the squad's 16th member in a face-off between Gagan Ajit and Senthil. The shock that would shatter awaited him when practice began at Sydney.

From being one of the senior-most players in the squad, the selectors had reduced him to standby, recruiting Devesh Chauhan for the role of goal-keeper in Alloysius' place. Adding insult to injury, was the Hobson's choice of staying back as standby or returning to India. He chose the latter.

Not only were the hockey mandarins unfair to him, so was the sports establishment as a whole. More than two decades after his Atlanta achievement, he has received neither reward nor recognition, even if they could assuage the humiliation he endured. The plot of land promised to Olympians by the AP/



Telangana governments turned out to be merely a mirage.

It would be an exaggeration to say he wasn't embittered by his experiences. Yet he soldiers on, a smile coming to his face easily, exhibiting an inner strength built on his unwavering faith. Come what may, he and his family remain fervent Catholics, refusing to let go of their faith that's been the sheet anchor of their lives.

Author of *My way—the biography of M.L. Jaisimha* (Apple Books, Amazon, Flipkart), commentary panellist for Sony Sports Television and Fancode, **A Joseph Antony** was a former senior assistant editor with *The Hindu*.

SPECIAL

# Divine Affire in the Ordinary

**Joe Anthony** writes a tribute to Ajna George, who passed away in January 2022 after a valiant battle with cancer. *Divyakarunyathinte Vanambady*, her biography written by Fr Joseph Kumbuckal and Jith George has recently been translated to English, *Nightingale of the Holy Eucharist*.



I have not met Ajna, but I have heard about her from testimonies of people who knew her closely, and by reading her biography. I am overwhelmed by her life story. Besides fascinating and compelling, this book throws you off balance. You are reading a sacred book of meditation, a book of prayer. Your reaction involves most human emotions, heavenly whispers of admiration and thunderous acclamations to divine interventions in her short, most ordinary, and unassuming life.

Ajna George was an ordinary girl from a middle class family, who lived a simple life with her parents and elder sister. There was nothing spectacular or exceptional about her life as a child. However, as she grew older, there seemed to be a gradual change in her mindset and behaviour. She became more focused on what she wanted to be in the future and how she was going to achieve it. This ordinary young girl decided to venture into the realm of the unusual and out-of-the-ordinary, into the domain of an extraordinary and exemplary life of action. What brought about this steady transformation seems to have been a new awareness of her love for Jesus, as she began preparing for her First Holy Communion. Her journey from now on was a blend of the spiritual and the physical.

I completed reading *Divyakarunyathinte Vanambady* by Fr Sabu Thomas and Jith George, surprisingly, in a number of days. A book such as this would generally have taken only a few hours. It was impossible to read it at a stretch as deep emotions overwhelmed me. You cannot proceed further until you have calmed down and offered a few fervent prayers for her and to her as well, and express deep gratitude to this awesome God of ours.

As you read on, Ajna's mysterious presence seems to hover over you and you can inhale the aroma of her sanctity and get invigorated and sanctified yourself. I regard her as my daughter. You might consider her as someone else. However she may appear to you, you will find it impossible to erase her image from your

memory for a long time to come. Apart from all the fine sentiments that flooded my mind, there was also a sense of jealousy, a holy jealousy, I might say, that she had so easily entered the sphere of holiness at such a young age and reached the pinnacle of sanctity, leaving me far behind to catch up with her, if I ever can.

This is a humble attempt to penetrate certain facets of Ajna's spirituality and a few of the main characteristics of her personality, hoping it will benefit the reader more than it would by reading her life-sketch. I am not competent enough to analyse them as a theologian would. I examine it from a layman's perspective to ascertain how her extraordinary life can impact ordinary people like us.

**Her unwavering faith in God and her deep love for her religion** seem to stand out most prominently. From early childhood she had an indissoluble bond with Jesus and was deeply immersed in his love. She prayed to him, learned about him. He was her best friend and she always carried him with her wherever she went. She did everything for him, and whatever she did for others was done for him, because she saw him in everyone.

The chapel was the prime source from where she derived fervour, blessing and the stamina to face the ordeals of the day. If you didn't know where Ajna was, you had better look for her in the chapel. She would invariably be found there. People saw Christ in her and accepted her challenge to attend daily Mass and receive Holy Communion.

Her faith in God's goodness was indomitable. When cancer had deformed her face and caused her untold suffering, she never complained. Neither did she express disappointment or sadness or despair, nor question God. She didn't entertain any negative sentiments either. She firmly believed God would not abandon her and what was happening to her was according to his will.

**Her love for the Holy Eucharist was so profound** and so insatiable that she would receive it without fail every single day of her life, even during lockdown. In spite of restrictions, priests took turns to

give her Holy Communion, often coming to her house. This was because she had developed a good rapport with them. The inclement weather, the unfamiliar locations, the seemingly unending distance, nothing could deter her from attending Holy Mass and receiving the sacraments during her out station ministry.

Ajna's holiness springs from her love for Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament. She loved to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. Her seraphic face and yearning eyes concentrated on the monstrance with ardent impulses of love, never blinking an eyelid, because she saw Jesus gazing at her. Every moment was singularly precious to her. Grace descended in torrents and soaked her at such occasions. In her father's words 'she gazed at the sacred host as though seeing Jesus for real.' So intense was her union with Jesus! She was a colossal giant in holiness which resulted from a ceaseless effort towards the two dimensional approach – the vertical and the horizontal. She was with God and in God. Her relationship with God's people was amiable, respectful and concerned.

**The Holy Scripture was the book she treasured the most.** She read it regularly and meditated upon it often. As she read, these revealed words galvanised into life and penetrated her so deeply that every strand in the tapestry of her soul was animated. She found them enlightening, encouraging and comforting. The ultimate act of preparation before any examination for her was reading the Bible. Scripture quotes decked the walls of her room and she often pondered over them in times of need.

Prayer was an essential component of her Christian life. She was very regular at prayer, especially all the family prayers. Apart from her personal prayers, she also recited the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3 pm, often with her friends, through her mobile. She kept a long list of intercessory prayers which she invoked in chapel with others on occasions.

There are certain fundamental

attributes common to every virtuous person because this individual is a child of God. There are also those pertaining to each individual because of the way that person lived and practised them. Ajna relentlessly tried to acquire and practise these virtues expected of a person trying to live a pious life. Her spiritual endowments are admirable.

**Simplicity is the hallmark of any virtuous person.** In Ajna, simplicity of mind and heart exuded a natural and dignified approach to life. There was nothing artificial or pretentious about her attitude or behaviour. She spoke softly and gently but persuasively. Her interactions with people had an element of spontaneous modesty. There was no malice or deceit in her. Her candid nature wouldn't harbour ill feelings against anyone or wish anyone harm. She never troubled anyone; never criticised, found fault with, discouraged, shouted at or scolded anyone, even as a teacher. Her students and friends speak volumes in unambiguous terms of her perennial goodness and sweetness.

**Humility is the foundation of every virtue.** Even when she took active part in the various activities in educational institutions or elsewhere, she preferred to remain backstage, giving preference to others to shine. She preferred to enjoy the success of others than of her own. She took no credit for her achievements, instead, passed them all onto others. She felt uncomfortable, embarrassed, and ill at ease when anyone praised her or even talked about her in public. She was averse to any show of admiration or adulation, as her modest mindset would cringe at the display of any such emotions. However, she was not dismayed at realising her popularity because that was a means she used to do good. Nor was she embarrassed when others turned to her for assistance because she saw these as welcome opportunities to glorify God. At a retreat for nurses she was invited to share her testimony after undergoing her third surgery. She was asked to come from the front when she chose to appear from backstage, the reason being their perception of her bearing Jesus within herself.

Modesty is a highly recommended virtue, especially in a woman.



*As you read on, Ajna's mysterious presence seems to hover over you and you can inhale the aroma of her sanctity and get invigorated and sanctified yourself. I regard her as my daughter. You might consider her as someone else. However she may appear to you, you will find it impossible to erase her image from your memory for a long time to come.*

Unfortunately, it is hardly the case in our times. Modesty in dress, behaviour, outlook, exposure, speech, manner, as a matter of fact, in every walk of life, is an important mark of Christian women. She disapproved of artificiality, unbecoming clothing, or unedifying manners. She wore simple and modest clothes, not branded outfits popular among her peers

**Suffering was a rude intruder at first but became an uninvited guest** in the last days of her life. Cancer gnawed her face with massive greed to recast it into a mangled mass of decaying flesh devoid of all human semblance. The surgeries, chemotherapies, radiation treatments, all reduced this helpless child to a distorted wreck, for eventually, there were no eyes, nose, ears, or mouth but a festering mass full of puss infested with worms. It is difficult to understand how this child endured all this agony, this interior martyrdom. As excruciating pain screamed through every pore in her face she must have suffered immensely and deeply, but it is difficult to even gauge the gravity of her pain because she camouflaged it so gracefully. She was offering this to Jesus and didn't want to reveal it, for fear of being deprived of the merits attached to it. Her suffering was redemptive. It seems to have transformed her because, instead of gloom and dejection, there was an aura of heavenly brightness on her face, an overflow of divine mien and seraphic beauty. Could it be an earthly compensation for the tragedy in her life? They say she asked for even more suffering when they were praying for her healing. Can anyone doubt the genuineness of her holiness?

Once she was asked, 'Do you not hate God for making you suffer like this?' Her reply was a slap on the face, 'Yes, I hate him, but my love for him is far greater than my hatred.'

**Ajna's hidden talents emerged when she became a member of the Jesus Youth movement** in college and grew into mature proportions. She was appointed the first coordinator of the movement in college. Since then, there was no turning back and no stopping. Jesus Youth transformed her. She was one determining factor for the development, transformation and progress of the

movement in the campus. She put her heart and soul entirely to it, organised and took part in innumerable activities. Her love for the underprivileged saw her going all out to bring smiles and joy in their dreary lives. With her friends, she chose ingenious ways to fund ventures undertaken for this end. Sympathy for the unfortunate and the sick in hospitals, compassion for prisoners, support for the homeless, feeding the hungry beggars and street dwellers, were all born out of her love for Jesus. As a Jesus Youth, she proclaimed Jesus, lived for Jesus and became the face of Jesus. She was a chirpy, bubbly, live-wire leader, a true missionary who gave Jesus the first position, and took him with her wherever she went. She was 'an ordinary girl of extraordinary dimensions', a hero who could challenge and lead. Her contribution to Jesus Youth was phenomenal. Her conduct was so inspiring and persuasive that people of other faiths joined the movement and actively contributed, even holding responsible positions.

**She was an excellent singer** with a melodious voice and she used this charming gift, wherever she could, to sing praises to Jesus. She wrote graceful songs, put them to music, and sang them. She didn't take pride in her talents or the ability to employ them because her motive was beyond self; it was for Jesus. That is why she could say with ingenious familiarity that 'time spent for Jesus is never wasted.' Her achievements, with the cooperation of other Jesus Youth members, were monumental. Her lifestyle influenced many.

**Courage and confidence were strong traits she manifested** when confronting unpredictable situations. When her parents brought the report of her cancer diagnosis, she checked the severity of sarcoma cancer on Google and understood the reality of it. She didn't panic but remained perfectly tranquil and unruffled. She explained the gravity of this dreaded disease to her devastated parents in detail. They were totally shattered in spirit and distraught, but it was she who comforted them. We do not know what is held in the clenched fist of an unknown future but we can prepare in advance to face them, even challenge them. Ajna read the doctor's report and

braced herself for the worst. Reversal of situations didn't affect her negatively, instead, she trusted in God's goodness and surrendered everything to him. 'Whatever happens is God's will and for our good and we should accept it. Nothing will happen without his knowledge,' she consoled her parents. Self-confidence and persistent courage enabled her not only to face the atrocious attack of cancer bravely, but also to fight it like a gallant warrior to retain her integrity of purpose and sublimity of vision.

**Gratitude was one of her strong attributes.** One way of expressing her thankfulness was baking cakes and sweets for her friends on various occasions of importance. No one would ever be deprived of an encouraging or an affectionate response to a message or a phone call, however trivial or insignificant it might be.

Gifted with high intellectual calibre and being a superb performer in many fields, she had a marvellous future laid out for her. She had planned to build a family with Christopher, like the family in Nazareth. Unfortunately that was not God's design. When she realised that their union was not what God intended, she strongly encouraged her soulmate to leave her and find another agreeable life partner.

**Certain physical attributes of the saintly soul** from our backyard, is worth considering. This innocent, cute and child-like angel was a person of pleasant personality, endowed with a charming and attractive smile, endearingly graceful in demeanour, sweet natured, affable and understanding, easily approachable, loving, kind and generous. That is quite a garland of complements, but a deserving one!

There was a general opinion among her teachers as well as her colleagues of some uniqueness about her, a quality bordering on mystic spirituality. This is evidenced by the way she conducted herself in church as well as at other places of worship and the manner of her conduct in general. Her reaction and response to situations and people bordered on a celestial nature, far beyond the ordinary and the mundane.

**Visitors and well-wishers who came to console and comfort her during her**

**illness, were themselves humbled** by her courageous stand and magnanimous manner and returned consoled and comforted themselves. She was not abashed or disconcerted when anyone came home. Unlike many, she always came forward happy to meet them. She would sit with them face to face, even when cancer had distorted her face and destroyed her identity. This, indeed, is proof of her genuine and honest nature.

Another trait of this angel was respect for her teachers. She would visit them, or keep in touch with them, even after she had passed out of school or college. She would greet them on Teachers' Day or other special occasions and never failed to express her gratitude and appreciation for their service. She was always thrilled whenever she met them and enquired about their wellness.

One could experience a sense of the supernatural in her if one was with her. She was singularly privileged to be in the presence of saints and angels, especially during her last days in the hospital. She was anointed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. How else can we explain the fact that in spite of being under sedation the whole day, she woke up suddenly at 6.30 pm and told her sister that Fr Jean Felix had lost the way to her room and asked her to go and help him.

Fr Jean also affirms that, on the day she passed away, he was prompted interiorly to go and give Holy Communion to Ajna in the afternoon, instead of his usual time around 6 pm. Did she have a premonition of her impending death?

She was a delicate flower of infinite beauty and worth that faded and withered before fully blooming. Her fragrance permeates far and wide, impacting many lives, especially the youth. Her life was an eloquent sermon preached from the pulpit of divine love. We pray that her charisma rains on us and engulfs us in a deluge of divine grace and leads us to where her blithesome existence is now surrounded by angels and saints, our ultimate destination. ■■

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Joe Anthony taught English and Mathematics in Chandigarh and Delhi in India, and in Muscat in Oman. He has now retired and lives in Gurgaon, India.

PARENTING

# A CHOLERIC CHILD CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

In part two of this series on The Temperaments, **Jilu Chengat** writes about the choleric temperament.



Like all the temperaments, choleric have a unique way of contributing to society. Choleric leave a lasting and visible impression on the world as they are usually leaders, entrepreneurs, and pioneers in their various fields. Your choleric child joins the ranks of St Paul, St Ignatius of Loyola, Mother Angelica and various other leaders in the Church and the world!

To understand the nuances of providing formation for a choleric temperament, we can look at some of their virtues and vices. Choleric tend to be very determined and diligent. They proactively and steadily work towards their goal but may struggle with impatience when they don't see results. They thrive on affirmation and can bear great loads when supported well. This is great, until someone questions them – especially their integrity or their vision. Their pride may cause them to quickly become defensive, angry and reactive. Their stubbornness and strong will may pose a challenge when their ideas need to be corrected or revised.

Choleric children may become frustrated if their siblings or peers don't want to join in their games or plans. You can challenge and teach them at an early age to work together. When parents model listening by inviting them to share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, they will likely be able to do that for others, prompting a team environment that stretches their independent natures. Perhaps two of the most important virtues to foster are humility and patience. Affirm them not for their achievements, but for their effort, their perseverance, or the

ways that they included and listened to others. Choleric often need reminding that the journey is just as, if not more important, than the final destination. When they fail or fall, be gentle with them and counteract their inner voice of self-accusation with affirmation and encouragement. As they grow in humility and patience, their natural self-motivation becomes more grounded and internally driven, bearing lasting fruits.

Parental formation of a choleric may seem like a daunting task because of their strong natures, but when formed patiently and intentionally, they have the potential to change and shape the world! So, next time you feel like throwing your hands up in the air with exasperation for your strong-willed choleric child, remind yourself that the world needs more saints and leaders that have the strength to stand for truth, justice and the gospel. If your choleric child can hone that strength in your home and through a loving parental relationship, imagine the possibilities!

#### BE FATHERED

*When in relationship with God the Father, parenting can lead to your own inner healing. It requires self-awareness and intentionality to let the Father heal us through the gift of our child, who may be very much like ourselves! Let's see how this can play out.*

Mary is a choleric mother to young Jenny. She was feeling very annoyed with Jenny's intensity and constant questions, until recently in prayer, God started reminding her of her own childhood. As a young child, Mary also had many

**Choleric tend to be very determined and diligent. They proactively and steadily work towards their goal but may struggle with impatience when they don't see results**

questions. She didn't mind doing the things her parents asked or expected, but it helped her if she knew why she was doing it. Her father was a very straightforward, strong personality who dismissed her questions and demanded that she do as she was told.

At first, she would feel very upset. Her father would tell her that she was being ridiculous and reacting for no reason. Eventually, she realised there was no point in being upset. When she was young, she just followed his expectations, but as she grew older, she learned how to get her way without her father knowing.

One day, she prayed with Jeremiah 1:5, *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.* She began to hear the voice of the Father whispering that he had made her for a beautiful purpose. He reminded her of all her doubts and emotions over the years and told her that 'she wasn't too much' and that 'he wanted to hear her questions.' After becoming a mother, Mary had put aside many of her dreams and passions, even from before the Lord. She experienced healing as the Lord drew her out, answered her questions and made space for the intensity of her feelings. As the Lord began to heal her own heart, Mary could see how much she desired to nurture Jenny's inspirations, questions, and passions, even if she hadn't received that in her own upbringing.

*Can you relate? Are you a choleric parent? How may God be inviting you to receive healing in your temperament so that you can more confidently and generously parent your child?* ■■

### Temperaments of the Saints!

It always helps to look to the saints as models of virtue. Like all of us, saints had blessings and challenges that came with their temperament. Let's look at a famous choleric saint!

#### ST PAUL

A zealous Pharisee, he was proud of his accomplishments against Jews. However, his conversion experience changed everything! Once he was convinced of the truth of Jesus Christ, he was a most zealous disciple and single-handedly brought the Good News to many. His choleric nature went from persecuting Christians to baptizing them. He goes to show that when oriented and formed in the truth, a choleric has an immense capacity to be a gift to the world.

Jilu Chengat lives in Massachusetts, USA where she lives out her missionary call as a wife and mother to three children. She enjoys writing and accompanying young people as they discern the voice of God in their lives.



# Most Sweet Odour

One must choose daily to be dead to sin and alive to God, writes **Anil Israel**.

The last line of the book of Judges in the Old Testament is like a summary statement: *In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 21:25). This sounds to be incredibly true in our present generation too. Everyone seems to be doing what they perceive to be right. To a larger extent, people tend to do what's pleasing to them, being least concerned, if it's pleasing to God or not. This is a sad sign of souls gone astray, for they are not under God's reign. God is unfortunately not the King of their hearts and Lord of their lives.

Fallen human nature, pulled downward by the irresistible force of concupiscence (inclination to sin), struggles to walk upright. *The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak* (Matthew 26:41). Like St Paul, we too often end up admitting: *I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do* (Romans 7:19). How can aching mankind ever come out of this seemingly-never-ending misery and shame?

They say the first step to solve a problem is to admit that you have a problem. The physician can only help the one who acknowledges that he is unwell. We need grace to see that we are in need of help. We need to accept the truth that we are in the midst of a spiritual warfare – the ongoing battle between good and evil. Whose side am I leaning on? Not to act on the side of the truth is indirectly strengthening the enemy of our soul. *Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters* (Matthew 12:30).

If I am just a passive bystander, I am not involved. I need to start living and stop merely existing. *Jesus came that we may have life, and have it abundantly* (John 10:10). Why am I unwilling to inhale the 'abundant life' waiting for me to embrace? Why am I reluctant to crucify the old self and resurrect to the *newness of life* (Romans 6:4) in Christ? I must consciously *choose life* (Deuteronomy 30:19), lest my eternity be jeopardized. I must choose daily to be *dead to sin and alive to God* (Romans 6:11). I must be willing to practise the itinerary of holiness every day.

The spiritual life is nothing but life in the Holy Spirit. If *the Helper, the Holy Spirit* (John 14:26) dwelling within me is sitting jobless, then I am spiritually dead. To be spiritually alive, I must make active efforts from my side. I must not ignore my daily conference call with God – my own time of personal prayer – to recharge my spiritual batteries. Daily reception of Holy Communion further purifies and strengthens my soul. A daily dose of Scripture reading is additional spiritual nourishment. A circle of friends whom I can count on for prayer support, helps me stay on track. I need to humble myself and seek guidance from those more mature in the spiritual walk. An elder mentor – a consecrated nun or an ordained priest – can be of vital support.

There must be more than this. What else can I do? Let's take a look at what some of the saints did. To be conscious

Besides the Bible, I need to devote adequate time to spiritual reading, or spiritual listening for that matter. Am I exposing myself to a daily dose of Catholic content to feed my starving soul?



## THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE - LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS › JOHN 10:10



of the prize paid for my salvation, we can learn to meditate on the passion and death of our beloved Saviour. This helps us do a proper examination of our conscience – to discover the weeds still waiting to be uprooted – weeds of pleasure, weeds of egoism, weeds of material possessions, and weeds of carnal living.

Besides the Bible, I need to devote adequate time to spiritual reading, or spiritual listening for that matter. Am I exposing myself to a daily dose of Catholic content to feed my starving soul? Am I exposing myself to Christian music to lift my dampened spirit? Do I have any holy art adorning the walls of my home? Do I take delight in a pilgrimage of faith with my family or friends? Do I unceasingly propel myself to be on the continuous learning curve? Am I willing to step out of my comfort zone and expand my missionary zeal? Am I willing to be an instrument for the greater glory of His Kingdom? My willingness to be faithful in small matters come-what-may is all that matters. ‘Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love’ (Mother Teresa).

May the sense of urgency in attaining heaven, compel us to abandon our lives to be radically transformed by God’s indispensable grace. May we be *unfailing in patience* (2 Timothy 4:2) and *eager to do good works* (Titus 2:14). May we *avoid godless chatter* (1 Timothy 6:20) and *do what pleases him* (1 John 3:22). May our pursuit of personal holiness be the *fragrant offering* (Ephesians 5:2) rising from our hearts. May we rise from spiritual ruin to emit the *most sweet odour* (Leviticus 1:13) – *the pleasing aroma* (2 Corinthians 2:15) of ardent piety. *For lack of wood the fire goes out* (Proverbs 26:20). With what wood am I keeping my spiritual life burning? ■■

# NewsWatch



## Pope Francis visited Kazakhstan to attend 7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Pope Francis arrived at Nur Sultan, capital of Kazakhstan on his 38th apostolic journey abroad, from 13-15 September.

The Congress, which aims to strengthen inter-religious ties, has been held in Kazakhstan at three-year intervals since 2003. Francis will be the first Pope to attend the gathering, which this year has around 100 participants from 50 countries.

Kazakhstan, the world's largest landlocked country, is in Central Asia. Despite its considerable size, Kazakhstan has a population of just 19 million people.

Catholics make up around 1 percent of Kazakhstan's population of 19 million, 70 percent of which is Muslim, and 25 percent Christian, mostly Russian Orthodox.



## INDIAN BISHOP RESIGNS POST TO BECOME A HERMIT

A Catholic bishop has become a hermit, quitting his position to fulfill his long-cherished desire, the first such case in the Catholic Church in India.

Auxiliary Bishop Jacob Muricken of Palai diocese of the eastern rite Syro-Malabar Church based in the southern state of Kerala left the bishop's house on August 15 and moved to a hermitage he built in Nallathanni in Kanjirappally diocese.

The idea of leading a solitary life came to him in 2017, five years after he was ordained auxiliary bishop of Palai.

The bishop said he looked forward to spending the rest of his life 'more in prayer and meditation and leading an eco-friendly life away from the hustle and bustle of the routines of a bishop.'

The prelate in an interview released through deepika.com, a Church-run news portal announcing his move, said his life and prayer in solitude 'will help transform the Catholic Church and people across the globe.'

'Solitary life does not mean that I hate the world, but to see the world as per the will of God who is the Creator. Now people treat the world as a utility and exploit it for luxury, but my attempt as a hermit is to live in the world according to the will of the Creator.'

Bishop Muricken hit international headlines in 2016 by becoming the first bishop in India to donate one of his kidneys to a Hindu. The prelate said his life in the hermitage will be totally focused on the Holy Host and with the presence of Christ all the time.



# Beatification of the ‘Smiling Pope’ and Two Canonizations



**P**ope Francis on September 4th beatified one of his predecessors, John Paul I, a briefly serving pontiff who distinguished himself with his humility and cheerfulness. John Paul I was born Albino Luciani, the son of a bricklayer in the Dolomite mountains in Italy.

During his brief tenure, he defended the Roman Catholic Church’s opposition to abortion and contraception but he also sought to reform institutions and root out corruption.

‘With a smile, Pope John Paul managed to communicate the goodness of the Lord,’ Francis said in his homily.

‘How beautiful is a church with a happy, serene and smiling face, that never closes doors, never hardens hearts, never complains or harbours resentments, isn’t angry, does not look dour or suffer nostalgia for the past,’ the pontiff said.

Pope Francis also approved the canonization of Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and Blessed Artemide Zatti.

A native of the Italian region of Lombardy, Scalabrini (1839-1905) was ordained a priest in 1863 and made bishop of Piacenza in 1876. As bishop, he founded the Missionaries of St Charles Borromeo (also known as the Scalabrinians). He also created the ‘Saint Raphael Association’, which, like the order he founded, was dedicated to offering pastoral care to migrants leaving Italy at the turn of the 20th century.

Scalabrini is also remembered for founding a diocesan newspaper, for caring for the poor and elderly, for being a promoter of Eucharistic adoration and a protector of correct liturgical chant. Pope Pius IX once described Scalabrini as ‘the apostle of the Catechism.’

Artemide Zatti, is an Italian layman who emigrated with his family to Argentina in the late 1800s, and who became a Salesian co-worker and missionary in Patagonia.



## THE ‘EIGHTH SACRAMENT’

**T**he Catholic presence in Kazakhstan dates back centuries, but today’s community was forged in the furnace of 20th-century persecution.

Archbishop Tomasz Peta, who is based in the capital Nur-Sultan, told AsiaNews in 2019 that, under Soviet rule, Catholics passed on the faith without priests or churches.

‘Catholics created a sort of eighth sacrament: that of the prayer of the Rosary,’ he said. ‘The reason is that the only thing they could do during the persecutions was to baptize their children and pray the Rosary.’

The papal visit’s motto is ‘Messengers of Peace and Unity,’ a sign of Francis’ desire that the trip will promote peacemaking and strengthen interfaith ties.

Pope Francis celebrated Holy

Mass on Wednesday at the Expo Grounds in Nur-Sultan for the small Catholic community. Pope Francis also met with the Bishops, clergy, seminarians, and men and women religious of the country on Thursday morning at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Fr. Ruslan Rakhimberlinov, the rector of the Catholic seminary in Karaganda, said the local community feels blessed to host the Pope in their homeland.

The Pope’s presence should also offer encouragement to Catholic minorities – not only in Kazakhstan but also in surrounding countries. Thousands of pilgrims from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and even Mongolia have reportedly attended the papal Mass in Nur-Sultan on Sept. 14.

# SOUNDREPLY



## MOVIE

### THIRTEEN LIVES

operation was widely broadcast and keenly followed by people around the world. To its credit, the movie stays true to the actual sequence of events as it unfolded during the time.

On June 23, 2018, a group of twelve boys from the local football team, along with their coach, go to explore the Tham Luang cave after practice. While they are in the cave, unbeknownst to them, torrential early monsoon rains begin, and by evening the parents reach the cave to find it fully flooded. They quickly notify the authorities, and very soon the Thai Navy seals arrive, but the divers fail to get past the narrow T-junction in chamber 3.

Vernon Unsworth, a British caver who lives locally, advises the authorities to get help from the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC), and thus flies in British cavers Rick Stanton and John Volanthen. The search very quickly turns into a massive international operation, with multiple teams of volunteers working on various fronts.

On 2nd July, Rick and John find all 12 boys and their coach alive and hungry on a narrow ledge about 4 kilometres from the cave mouth, after a 6-hour journey through the flooded cave against the currents. Although the navy seals bring them food a day later, and a couple of seals along with a doctor stay with the boys until the authorities work out a plan to rescue them, time is running out for the rescuers as the onset of the monsoon in its fierce majesty is waiting to happen any day now.

The movie does a wonderful job of chronicling the selfless

Even the potency of suffering and death is blunted by faith; for, the person of faith is so convinced of the overshadowing love of God in this life or the life after, that like St Paul, he knows that absolutely nothing 'can separate us from this love of God in Christ Jesus.'

sacrifice of many thousands of people who gave their time and energy to rescue a group of boys whom none of them had ever seen or known, some even their very livelihood as in the case of the farmers whose crops were flooded when volunteers tried to divert water flowing into the cave. Yet, the enduring image for me is the contrast of 'faith' between the boys and their parents and their Western rescuers that runs through the movie. Of course, it is human ingenuity and skill that saved the boys, yet how much of that becomes possible because of the prayers and the intense faith in God of the people around them is a question that is open to the viewer!

Faith is a funny preposition – as St Thomas Aquinas says, 'to [the] one who has it, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible!' Indeed, as the letter to Hebrews puts it, faith sure is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. Even the potency of suffering and death is blunted by faith; for, the person of faith is so convinced of the overshadowing love of God in this life or the life after, that like St Paul, he knows that absolutely nothing 'can separate us from this love of God in Christ Jesus.'

*Thirteen Lives* is a 2022 film based on the Tham Luang cave rescue, directed and produced by Ron Howard. For most of us, the actual events of 2018 would still be fresh in memory, as the whole search and rescue

#### REVIEW BY

Joseph Anthraper

Joseph lives in Southampton, UK with Mahima, his wife and their 4 kids.



# Chandeliers

By Jisha John

## ✧ Letter from Aloysius Gonzaga

My beloved in Christ,  
Peace from the heavens!  
Oh taste and see that the Lord is good!

**R**eceived your letter. I am praying for you. I submit you to the most Immaculate Heart of Mamma for safe keeping. My dear, I was a piece of twisted iron; I entered the religious life to get wrought back straight. I was born in 1568 to a noble family, as the eldest son of the Marquis of Castiglione. My father, Ferrante Gonzaga brought me up with much expectation and hope as I was the heir of the family title. He took me along on military expeditions and made me a 'little soldier' from the age of four. The vocabulary I had learned from those camps was displeasing and my mother was worried about it.

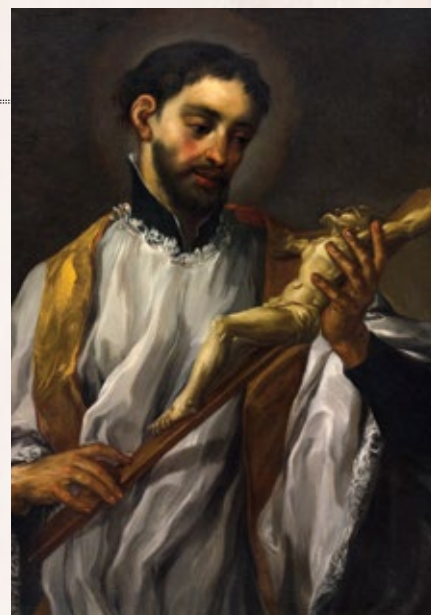
Once, malaria and fever hit me badly leaving me very sick and bedridden. Later, at the age of seven, I had a spiritual awakening. A special affinity to prayer kindled in me. As you know, it was the time of Renaissance in Italy. There was every chance of going astray but prayer safeguarded me. That was the first time I was updated to something higher, high above the skies. A call to teach catechism to the poor kids grabbed my attention. My friends teased me for those 'unusual' practices. I was mocked for spending time in prayer. But it didn't shatter me.

My brother and I were sent to Florence to learn the customs of princes. It didn't bring any satisfaction to me. Later, while I was in Mantua, I read about the saints. That was a giant leap. A book on Jesuit missionaries in India changed me upside down. A desire to join the Jesuits kindled in me. Though I was supposed to learn 'art of arms', I was kept aside for 'art of souls'

by my Father in heaven. I read the Psalms. It brought me wisdom. Mamma Mary was my refuge. She secured me for Christ by her abundant intercession. The time spent in meditation and fasting strengthened me from inside. I fasted three days a week and lived on little food. Ascetic lifestyle kept my soul hale and healthy.

In 1580, while I was in Castiglione, I had the great opportunity to meet St Charles Borromeo. And the best thing happened was that he administered me the First Holy Communion. The prompting to join the Jesuits was like a fire. Nothing worldly could extinguish it. I presented my desire before my family. Papa was totally against it. He couldn't accept my decision and did everything from his part to distract me. But it all went futile. The period of tussle was quite long but God's will had to be fulfilled. At last, Papa gave in. I still remember his letter to the Jesuit Superior General. It weighed much. The letter said, 'I merely say that I am giving into your Reverence's hands the most precious thing I possess in all the world.'

The next important event happened during my novitiate. St Robert Bellarmine was my spiritual advisor. He was God's providence. Seminary life was less demanding since I had been practising an ascetic life for a long time. But certain things troubled me. I was obliged to eat more and spend time in recreation with my fellows. You might be surprised reading this. But trust me dear, it was really hard for me. And it was forbidden to pray except at stated times. Those things worried me a little. But I knew I was under formation. I needed more room for Christ in me. I was a twisted iron. It wouldn't be straight one fine day. It required time and a process. And I practised the virtue of obedience.



Plague hit Italy in 1591. I was at service in one of the Jesuit hospitals. I washed and fed the sick and prepared them for sacraments. And soon, I contracted the disease. It took a long time to recover. I spent time in prayer and had a premonition that I would die soon, on the octave of Corpus Christi. And months later, I departed to the heavens when I was 23, on the feast of Corpus Christi. My eyes were on the crucifix I was holding, and I said the name of Jesus.

Here I would like to share a small prayer with you. I used to say it.

O Holy Mary, my mistress, into thy blessed trust and special keeping, into the bosom of thy tender mercy, this day, every day of my life and at the hour of my death, I commend my soul and body; to thee I entrust all my hopes and consolations, all my trials and miseries, my life and the end of my life, that through thy most holy intercession and thy merits, all my actions may be ordered and disposed according to thy will and that of thy divine Son. Amen.

Sending you warm hugs and kisses from the heavens

With love.  
Your friend and sibling,  
Aloysius

# time out



Mail your answers to [quiztime@jykairosmedia.org](mailto:quiztime@jykairosmedia.org) before 25th November 2022.  
The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global

## Q Spot the difference

Find 8 differences in these two images.

A



B

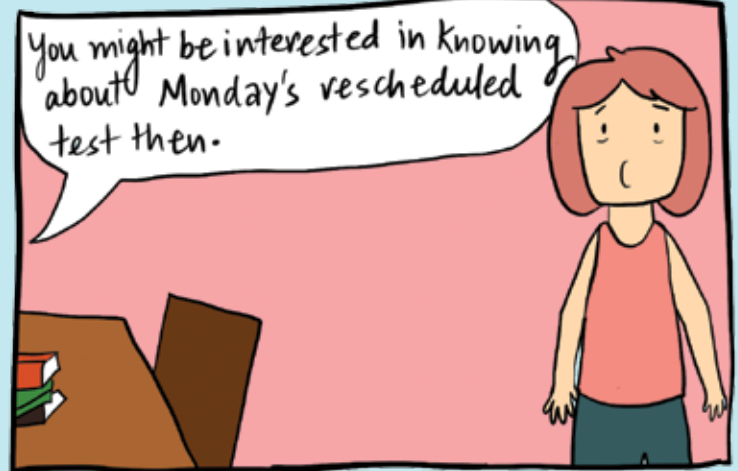
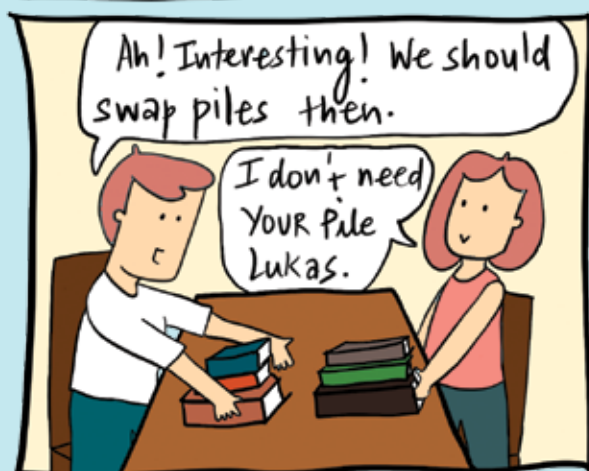
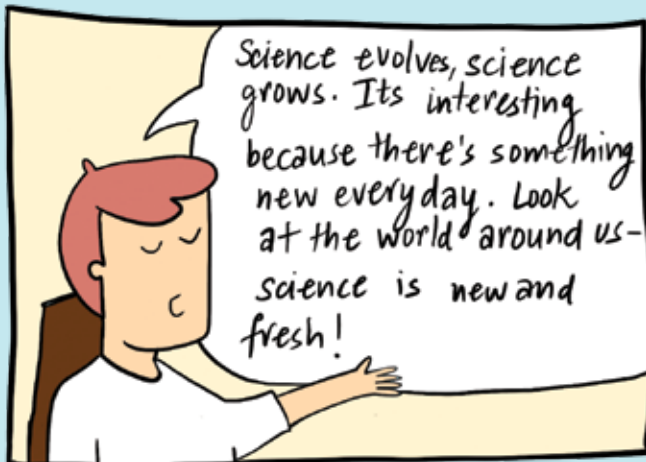


### ANSWERS TO TIMEOUT QUIZ, ISSUE 55

March for Life, Battle of Pamplona,  
Lisbon, Spiritual Exercises, The  
Alchemist, Gottfried Leibniz,  
stronger, courageous, Hodos,  
Pope St John Paul II, 20, St  
Alphonsus Liguori, St Gianna  
Molla, arose, Phineas, 4, WWII

# LUKAS and RAY

By Steffi Ambhat Fara  
IG @sculpturecess-steffi





LINE-UP

Benny Prasad  
VJ Traven  
Masterplan  
Acts of the Apostles  
Sheldon Bangera  
Vox Christi

# ALL GO 2022 Rhythm

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Nov 2022

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