



Asian Journal of Religious Studies

“The Lord is truly among us.”

July-August 2019

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Asian Journal for Religious Studies

“The Lord is truly with us.”

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Editorial

A Message of Hope and Joy

The visit of Rev Fr Arturo Sosa, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus to Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, campus on March 5-7, 2019 was truly a moment of grace for the whole campus. So this issue of our Journal is focused mostly on his visit.

Born on 12 November 1948, Arturo is the thirty-first and present Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He was elected Superior General by the Society's 36th General Congregation on 14 October 2016, succeeding Adolfo Nicolás. As a Venezuelan, he is the first person born in Latin America to lead the Jesuits.

On 14 October 2016, during the thirty-sixth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, the assembly elected Sosa as the Order's thirty-first Superior General to succeed Adolfo Nicolás. He became the first Latin American to head the Jesuits. In his first address as Superior General, he said that Jesuits should look for "alternatives to overcome poverty, inequality and oppression" and also to collaborate with others "inside and outside the Church".

In 2017, in a visit to the Jesuit mission in Cambodia, Sosa met with a group of Buddhist monks in the Buddhist-majority country. In 2018, commenting on the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Sosa disagreed with the synod's description of secularization as "a dark phase that is in the process of being overcome", instead of calling secularization a "sign of the times" for the Catholic Church.

In February 2019, after guiding Jesuits and their lay collaborators through two years of discernment, Sosa announced four priorities that would guide the Society's decisions for the next decade. These were: teaching discernment through the use of the Spiritual Exercises, walking with the poor in their quest for dignity and justice, accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future, and collaborating in the care of our Common Home. Pope Francis declared these priorities to be very much in line with those of his pontificate.

His presence in the JDV campus has been a blessing to all of us, bringing us tremendous joy and enthusiasm. We hope that this issue of the Journal has been able to mediate that joy, which is characteristic of Arturo as well as the present Pope.

The AJRS team wishes each one of the readers a joy-filled and meaningful life.

The Editor



Welcome to Father Superior General

Bhausahab Sansare SJ

Rector, Papal Seminary, Pune

On behalf of our Papal Seminary community, I welcome Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society Jesus to our Home of Love. I also extend a warm welcome to Fr. Vernon D'Cunha (RA), Fr. Lisbert D'Souza (RA), Fr. George Pattery (POSA) and Fr. Juan Antonio Alves (Delegate For International Houses in Rome) to our great Home of Love. We put our hands together and welcome them warmly.

As a Superior General, Fr. Arturo Sosa is the head of the Society of Jesus and for us in JDV, he is a Chancellor of JDV. He is the 31st General of the Society of Jesus, elected on Oct 14, 2016. He comes from Venezuela. He is a person of vast experiences in the administration of the Society. He held several responsible posts and portfolios in the Society. He has a wealth of knowledge and wisdom.

He is a very down to earth person. What I recollect from his interventions during General Congregation 36 is that he has a deep love and respect for the poor and the marginalized. To accomplish the mission of God, he believes in collaboration and networking and he urges us to promote it. Another event that has left a great impact on me, which I fondly remember, is after his election as General, he was invited for a meal in

Bellarmino, a Jesuit Formation House in Rome, about 2.5 Kilometers from the Generalate. I was very much touched by his gesture, as he walked to Bellarmino. First he went and greeted the Kitchen Staff. He says, all who are working with us and for us are our mission partners.

Dear Fr. General, you have a personality fitting to an Army General. We thank you very much for visiting us in Papal Seminary, Home of Love, and blessing it with your presence. Formation of Priests in Papal Seminary is a Privileged Mission entrusted to the Society by the Church; it is, in fact, a gift from the Church. Papal Seminary which was started in Kandy, Sri Lanka in 1893 was a fruit of vision and discernment of Pope Leo XIII, with a clear motto: "Your sons, India, will be the Ministers of Salvation for you." Bearing this motto in mind, we form the Priests for the Church, especially the Church in India. Papal Seminary makes efforts to form Priests imbued with the mind and heart of Christ, in communion with the Holy Father and the Universal Church. We form them as the best Priest-collaborators and cooperators with their Bishops in their respective Dioceses.

At Papal Seminary, we are, altogether staff and students 193 community members: among the 193 members 19 are staff members - 14 are Jesuits from 10 different Provinces in India and 5 Diocesan Staff from 5 different Dioceses. Students from three different rites: Latin, Syro Malabar and Malankara from 64 Dioceses and from a couple of religious congregations. Ours is a good collaborative team. Our staff is well qualified and gifted. Our students are also blessed with multiple talents and gifts. They are the chosen ones. Papal Seminary has altogether given 78 prominent leaders (Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops) and shepherds for

the Church. It has not only given prominent leaders to the Church but also to the Society, e.g. Fr. George Pattery SJ. Thank you for all your support and prayers. Enjoy your stay in Pune.

(Welcome Speech of Rector, Papal Seminary on March 6, 2019)

A Moment of Grace

The visit of Fr General to our Community was a moment of grace to me personally and to the whole Papal Seminary Community. He spent time with us challenging us, motivating us and inspiring his. Through his simple and prophetic words and actions, he has challenged the seminarians to be people of God, who would commit themselves wholeheartedly to the Church and God's people. He was a man of prayer, conviction and freedom.

He challenges us to live our vocation and call in an atmosphere of joy, hope and freedom, like Pope Francis himself.

For Papal Community, it was a moment of grace, where we could experience the loving presence of God in our midst. It was a challenge, guidance and inspiration. May he continue to lead more people to God! May we learn to reach out to the ordinary people, as he has been doing!

Bhausahab Sansare



With Gratitude and Trust

Rt Rev Arturo Sosa SJ
Superior General, Society of Jesus

I am very happy to be with and address you at the Papal Seminary, fondly called “Home of Love.” I am glad to hear that you have celebrated 125 years of fruitful and grace-filled existence. I join you in thanking God for His wondrous blessings.

Let me share with you some of my reflections, inspired by the motto of your Jubilee Celebration, “Looking Back with Gratitude, Looking Forward with Trust.”

1. Looking Back with Gratitude

This part of the motto reminds me of what St. Ignatius wanted us to beg for ‘to be stirred to profound gratitude so that we may love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things.’

You all have celebrated the 125th Jubilee Year recently. Your memories are thus fresh with the chronological history of the Papal Seminary and so I shall not repeat this. But I would like to take up for reflection, the words of Pope Leo XIII inscribed on his sacerdotal Jubilee medal: “Filii tui India, administri tibi salutis!” meaning, “Your own sons, O India, will be the heralds of your salvation!” Pope Leo XIII certainly had foresight and vision in making this statement. The mission of forming heralds of salvation for India was,

through the initiative of Archbishop Msgr Ladislaus Michael Zaleski, entrusted to the Jesuits. The late Archbishop Msgr Ladislaus Michael Zaleski left no stone unturned and toiled tirelessly and with determination to get the Papal Seminary started in Kandy in 1893.

In 1955, with the help of the then Jesuit Mission Superior of Pune, Rev. Fr Pius Geisel, SJ, the Papal Seminary was shifted to Pune. Pune is known for its educational and cultural heritage. Pune has also given birth to many social movements and many social activists born in Pune were moved and influenced by Christian missionaries.

When we glance through the annals of the birth and history of the Papal Seminary, we cannot resist thanking and praising God for His continual blessings and graces. Our praises, as said in the Common Preface IV, add nothing to His greatness, but our desire to praise and thank God is itself a grace from God. We thank God for the number of eminent priests and missionaries who have passed out from the portals of the Papal Seminary. Among them are four Cardinals and 75 Bishops and Archbishops serving the Church across India. We are grateful to God for them.

The Present Situation of Papal Seminary:

I hear that your community comprises of 193 members – staff and students from three different Rites, from 62 dioceses and four religious congregations. It is a mini-Church by itself. Yours is culturally a very rich community, blessed with multitalented and gifted Fathers and Brothers. I thank God for each one of you. It is really edifying to know that you, together with De Nobili College and JDV, reached out to the flood-affected victims in Kerala with seven truck-loads of food materials. Thirty-three of your Seminarians volunteered

to do rehabilitation work after the floods. Financially, you have also helped the people who were affected by the Cyclone 'GAJA' in Tamil Nadu. Your community also supports financially the education of students from your neighbourhood. Supporting education is a wonderful thing; it empowers them. I appreciate your involvement in pastoral and social ministries, especially your involvement in St. Anthony's parish, which is situated in the heart of Dharavi (Mumbai) one of the largest slums of Asia.

I am glad to hear that you are fostering a new form of governance – that of collaboration and networking. Formation in the Papal Seminary is a collaborative venture of Formators, Students and Support Staff. Your Formators are very student friendly and approachable, helping all of you to grow in the wisdom of the Lord and to strengthen your companionship for the mission. I appreciate your Living-Group approach. Your different academies, big or small in numbers appreciate, share and celebrate their culture with each other. These formation activities foster hands-on experiences of collaboration and networking will be very useful for you for your future ministries.

A good collaboration exists in the Papal Seminary between the Jesuits, the Diocesan staff and the CBCI. I am grateful to the Bishops for giving the Papal Seminary their best Priests as Formators. I am grateful especially to the Local Ordinary, His Lordship Bishop Thomas Dabre, for his continued support to the Seminary.

2. Looking Forward with Trust

The Church is facing challenges all over the world. These challenges are hampering the Mission of Christ. To meet or encounter these external challenges, we need to form ourselves well, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. We need to be prudent but at the same time, stand up for the truth. For meeting the internal challenges that we encounter at the personal or congregational or diocesan levels, I urge you to keep strengthening your spiritual and emotional lives. We cannot really encounter the external challenges unless and until we deeply encounter the internal challenges, which are within our jurisdiction.

To draw insights and inspiration for your Formation and Mission, please keep reflecting on the Church's documents, namely, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, *Laudato Si* and *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

I invite you, as Seminarians and Priests to have your lives characterized by Margins, Magis and Discernment.

- **Margins:** Heeding the advice of Pope Francis, we are invited “go to the peripheries,” or to the margins, to take up ministries that are challenging, where no one else will dare to go. We are called to stand for the underprivileged, migrants and women who are exploited by the powerful. The Dalits and tribals need to have a special place in your hearts.
- **Magis:** You can accomplish this if you have the spirit of Magis, which always seeks the Greater Glory of God in everything you do. The spirit of the magis invites us to do “more” and to do it “better”. Mediocrity has no place in the spirituality of the magis. Magis

does not lead you to compete with others. With others, we are in collaboration and cooperation. What God wants to foster among us and with people are collaboration and networking.

- **Discernment:** We need to foster discernment, individually and in common because we are doing the Mission of God and it cannot be done without the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Our God is always at work. We need to work with and for Him and for His people who are most in need. To work together in a spirit of collaboration and networking, we need to inculcate a spirit of discernment, individually and in common.

Conclusion

The universal Church needs you, dear Brothers. You have St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit to come to India and the patron of the Missions as the Patron of this Seminary. We are invited to be, after our formation in Papal Seminary, dedicated and committed priests and missionaries like St. Francis Xavier, who gave up family, wealth and his personal desires to give his life for Jesus and embark on mission journey to India, in obedience to his Superior, St. Ignatius. He was humble and obedient though he came from a noble family and was well educated.

I take this opportunity to thank the Church and all the Ecclesiastical Authorities for their trust in and support for the Jesuits. I thank the Provincial of South Asia, Fr. George Pattery, for guiding and accompanying you in this Formation for Mission. I thank and appreciate Fr. Rector and every Staff Member for making sincere efforts to accompany and form you to be the kind of priests that the Church in India

requires today. I am also grateful to the support staff of the Papal Seminary for their commitment, dedication and collaboration in this important mission.

Dear Brothers, I wish each of you God's blessings and assure you of my prayers and support. My sincere desire is to see you as Priests and Missionaries imbued with the spirit of the magis, with a deep love for the people of your dioceses and respect for your Local Ordinaries. Collaboration in the diocese and with other dioceses and with all people of good will is, perhaps, the only way to proceed in the face of the challenges we encounter today. We, the Jesuits, will always stand by you: we are partners in the Mission of God.

As I end my message, I would like to thank and pray for the repose of the souls of the Seminary staff who have gone to their heavenly abode in recent years: Fr. Lorenzo Fernando, Fr. Francis Pereira, Fr. Noel Seth and Fr. Kurien. I also thank and pray for the repose of the souls of our departed support staff: Mr Juel Baa and Mr Solomon Dungdung.

Do pray for me and the Society of Jesus. May you be blessings for India, the Church and the world! Thank you!

(Talk of Rev Fr Superior General to the Papal Seminary Community, Pune on March 6, 2019. Staff -Jesuits and diocesan-, students of Philosophy and Theology from 62 dioceses and four religious congregations – totally 193.)

“



A Report of Fr. General's Visit to Pune

Rev Fr Edward Mudavassery SJ

Rector, De Nobili College, Pune

1. Fr. General arrived by road from Mumbai with Frs. Vernon D'Cunha, Lisbert D'Souza and Pierre Belanger at 7.30pm. They were welcomed at the Grotto by DNC community, 95-year-old Ted Bowling being one of them, to the accompaniment of Chotanagpur tribal dance and with a Marathi shawl and Peshwa head gear. Before proceeding to the house he planted a tree at the premises of the Marian Grotto. All the materials used for the welcome and decorations were eco-friendly.

2. On 6th at 7am Fr. General blessed the "Centre for Ignatian Spirituality and Research" at De Nobili College. Fr. Rector gave a short speech about the Centre, the background for this initiative and about its objective. Fr. General also pointed out that the service of the Spiritual Exercises and the science of Discernment is the 1st of the Universal Apostolic Preferences. He underlined that without this basic foundation the works the Jesuits do cannot be called Jesuit work. Pope Francis too has stressed that these are also the preferences of the Church for its renewal and revitalization in our fast changing, technology-driven world. It is hoped

that the Centre will be able to provide short and long term courses once it is equipped with adequate facilities and staff.

3. Following the blessing Fr. General posed for a community photo of the world's largest formation community of the Jesuits. Diversity is the hallmark of DNC Community. This is not merely a diversity of languages and cultures, these young Jesuits represent the diversity of missions their provinces undertake. Despite these diversities they are united in mind and hearts and are friends in the Lord because of the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises that binds them together.

4. As Fr. General was proceeding for his breakfast, he stopped at the "Pope Francis Herbal Garden" that came into existence when Pope Francis promulgated "Laudato Si," inviting all to care for our Common Home. Incidentally 'Caring for our Common Home' is also one of the 4 UAP. In his interaction with the scholastics in the evening he referred to this point by saying that at the individual, community and institutional level there must be visible life style changes, conserving water, energy, avoiding the use of plastics and recycling the waste materials. He pointed out that each one needs to go through an ecological conversion not merely carry out certain projects.

5. The next program at DNC was at 4pm to 5.30pm. Fr. General addressed the Jesuit scholastics on the following and later interacted with them. The following were the main points which he elaborated in his talk:

6. Unity of life and mission: He said that some Jesuits considered mission as work. They were very busy doing things; they gave minimum time for community and prayer. He cited the example of our founding fathers at Venice while they were waiting to go to Jerusalem. Their work preceded

prayer, Eucharist and spiritual conversation. Some people ask why one should be a Jesuit if the same work can be done by the lay persons. The answer lies in the unity of life and mission which is crucial for the Jesuit. When they could not go to the Holy Land, they offered themselves to the Pope. They were spiritually free to accept as God's will whatever ministry the Holy Father asked them to carry out. The unity of life and mission and discernment are gifts given to the Society by the Holy Spirit. This helps us to live as friends in the Lord, superiors, directors of works, principals, deans and other members of the community. It is our responsibility to safeguard this gift in the Society. It is in this context, the recent General Congregations of the Society of Jesus have stressed the community itself as mission because it is in the community we experience this triple unity.

7. Some consequences for formation:

- We must live in a consistent way; we must walk the talk. We see so many scandals in the Church today. There is a mismatch between what we are and what we preach.
- We must be transparent. Everyone has sinned (Jn. Ch. 8: one who has not sinned...) Mistakes are liable to happen, but one must be open to his superiors. (importance of Examen, the manifestation of conscience)
- Community as mission draws from the unity of life and mission. Be an active and positive member of the community. Some give minimum time for the community. Jesuit community is a dynamic group. We change regularly according to the needs of the mission. Our life of unity will be manifest in the way we celebrate the Eucharist. The disciples of Emmaus. Formation must help us to grow in this unity of life and mission.

8. Discernment in common: No attachment to any place or anyone (offering to the Pope for the mission). Jesuits these days tend to get attached to work, province, place etc.

9. Another area of discernment is intellectual depth: Study in the Society is not for getting a degree but it is an instrument for better discernment. Hence intellectual formation is apostolic.

10. Obedience: In the Society, we do not ask, ‘what do you like?’ Obedience is an order. We search and find God’s will and follow it. The superior who gives the orders pays attention to ‘cura personalis and cura apostolica’, the person and the circumstances. The superior is responsible for the life and mission of the person. Creativity is necessary and it is a gift from the Holy Spirit. Persons, places and circumstances have to be taken into consideration. Mission is not individualistic; there must be discernment between creativity and obedience.

11. What does the Society expect from the scholastics? Formation is also simultaneously probation. No one must be allowed to pronounce the profession unless he proves himself worthy. Constitutions Part 5, Ch. 2: [516] - 1. “No one will be admitted to any degree of belonging unless he is judged fit in the Lord. For profession it means thorough screening through protracted and exacting tests, and clearance from the General, who will have reports from other superiors and individuals whom he has asked to testify.”

12. Our primary vocation is to consecrated life; priesthood is a means. In the Society coadjutor brothers and priests are primarily consecrated persons. They are incorporated into a community of consecrated persons and can be sent on a 95-year-old mission. The most important moment for a Jesuit is the Final Vows and not ordination or diaconate. In

the Formula of the vows, the requirement to be a member of the Society is that you “understand all things according to the Constitution.” (Pope Francis had asked the delegates of GC36 to look into the way we celebrate ordination, diaconate, final profession etc.)

13. Universal Apostolic Preferences must impact the life of each Jesuit. We must live the UAP, rooted in Christ. The only way is to follow Christ.

14. Why the Spiritual Exercises do not transform us? If you are a man of prayer, every ministry you are sent to will transform us. (Early in the morning Jesus went to a lonely place to pray. When his disciples looked for him they found him in prayer.). In his days, people of faith used religion to persecute him. It will not be different for his disciples. Jesus worked for the liberation of humanity. He has not given us an easy task. For following the footsteps of Jesus, the Society will pay a very high cost.

15. Youth (Universal Apostolic Preferences or UAP): The young people have a crucial role in the Church. The Church must listen to the youth and make space for them to contribute to the Church’s mission.

16. The UAP will have to be the “Locus Theologicus” of our life and mission, an experience of following Jesus the incarnated Son of God. We are entering into an era of change in the Society and the Church. The Pope has endorsed the UAP as also Church’s preferences. Now we must take responsibility for these preferences, whether it is development, ecology, migration or the youth. We need to make changes in our personal and institutional life; e.g. use of plastic, water, energy, consumerism etc.

17. Why doesn't The Spiritual Exercises transform us? Because we do not do the Examen as Ignatius would like us to do. We must do examen after every important moment of our day. After we preach to the people, we must examine ourselves; what about me? After teaching a class to the student, I must examine myself. There must be community and Institutional examens.

18. UAP must impact community, institution, formation and our own person. We must practice spiritual conversation in our weekly gathering and other deliberations. We must do it. Let us do it.

(Notes taken down by Edward Mudavassery SJ of Fr. General's talk to the DNC Scholastics on 6th March at 4.00 pm to 5.30pm)

(Contd from p. 25) (Because we needed a room to accommodate Fr. Vernon close to Fr. General's room). Even today, he continues to say that I live in the room next to the room where the General stayed.

Fr. General was very casually dressed and very simple in his approach and dealings. He enjoyed every meal and occasion organized in honour of him. It was a surprise to many of us to see that such a great personality in such a simple style moving around. It was very clear that he did not want/like any luxury, pomp and show.

Though on the one hand he enjoyed the hospitality and company of people around him, he was aware of his mission; he was up to his business and serious with regard to his visit. Without mincing words, he said all that he wanted to say about the Society and the vision of the Society. He is of the opinion that these goals can be achieved by working together as one society. We started discussing about the wonderful things he had told us. We were inspired by the ideals of his simple living and high thinking. We should practice the values he talked about so that we become true Jesuits. Working together as one community we have learned that such occasions are moments of grace and our spirit was uplifted. We await the next visit of our General. **-Fr Jacob Kulangara SJ**



Foster Collaboration: Jesuit General Tells Indian Seminarians

Arturo Sosa SJ

Father Arturo Sosa invited the seminarians and priests to have their lives characterized by Margins, Magis and Discernment.

Jesuit Superior General Father Arturo Sosa has asked seminarians in India to become priests who care for the people at the margins by developing a sense of collaboration with all.

“We are invited to go to the peripheries to take up ministries that are challenging, where no one else will dare to go,” Father Sosa said while addressing a gathering of Papal Seminary community in Pune on March 6.

Father Sosa arrived in India March 1 for a week-long visit of various Jesuit houses, including Papal Seminary in Pune, which celebrated its 125 years of existence last year.

The 70-year-old Jesuit General expressed his happiness to be with the staff and students of the seminary. He based his talk to the community on the Jubilee theme: “Looking Back with Gratitude, Looking Forward with Trust.”

“The universal Church needs you,” he said assuring semi-

narians that “the Jesuits, will always stand by you: we are partners in the Mission of God.”

“The Church is facing challenges all over the world. These challenges are hampering the Mission of Christ. To meet these external challenges, we need to form ourselves well, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually,” said the global Jesuit head.

Father General invited the seminarians and priests to have their lives characterized by Margins, Magis and Discernment.

He wanted the seminarians to heed the advice of Pope Francis to “go to the peripheries” by taking up challenging ministries, standing up for the “underprivileged, migrants and women who are exploited.”

This needs to be accomplished with a spirit of Magis (which means more), always seeking “the Greater Glory of God in everything you do. Mediocrity has no place in the spirituality of the magis, he said.

He also wanted them to foster discernment because “we are doing the Mission of God and it cannot be done without the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”

“In order to work together in a spirit of collaboration and networking, we need to inculcate a spirit of discernment, individually and in common,” he said.

The Jesuit head also recalled how Papal Seminary was founded in Sri Lanka inspired by the words of Pope Leo XIII. The Pope had said: “Filii tui India, administri tibi

salutis!”(Your own sons, O India, will be the ministers of your salvation!”)

The national seminary was set up in central Ceylon's capital Kandy in 1893 to avoid India's caste differences and entrusted to the Belgian Jesuits. It was moved to Pune in 1955.

He recalled how Papal Seminary, together with other major seminaries, reached out to the flood-affected victims in Kerala with 7 truck-loads of food materials. He also remembered that the seminary also helped those affected by Gaja cyclone in Tamil Nadu.

He appreciated the “good collaboration” existing in the Papal Seminary between the Jesuits, the diocesan staff and the Indian bishop’s conference.

“I am grateful to the Bishops for giving the Papal Seminary their best Priests as Formators,” he said.

Father Sosa also thanked Bishop Thomas Dabre of Pune for his steady support for the the seminary.

END

Pune, Collaboration , Jesuit General, Seminarians

(Taken from <http://india.ucanews.com/news/foster-collaboration:-jesuit-general-tells-indian-seminarians/39469/daily>)



Lent is Gift of Joy, Says Visiting Jesuit Superior General

Arturo Sosa SJ

Prayer, contemplation, meditation and worship bring about our reconciliation with God, said Fr Sosa. Jesuit Superior General Father Arturo Sosa, who is on a visit to India, stressed the urgency of reconciliation with God, humanity and nature during his Ash Wednesday Mass in Pune.

“We need urgently to reconcile ourselves with God, fellow human beings and with nature,” Father Sosa said on March 6 while celebrating the Eucharist on the first day of the season of Lent at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth (JDV) seminary.

Father Sosa maintained that the season of Lent is a gift of joy. Two words here are striking: gift and joy. Lent is God's gift to us, and it brings us great joy. The joy of returning to God — the God who fills us with joy, restores us and reconciles us with Himself, with all His children, and with all His creatures, he said.

He added that Jesus proposes very precise and practical steps to realize this reconciliation. The three steps are: prayer, fasting and alms-giving.”

The global head of Jesuits, also the JDV Chancellor, want-

ed the 1,100 staff and students of the seminary to engage with the three steps and “strive for the triple reconciliation — with God, with others, and with nature.”

Prayer, contemplation, meditation and worship bring about our reconciliation with God. Alms-giving makes us aware of the poor--the millions struggling to “survive in our selfish world,” he said. Alms-giving means “not only giving what we have but...it also is self-giving. It reconciles us with all of humankind,” the Jesuit said.

Fasting creates an awareness of God's generosity through the gifts of nature. “Fasting could help us to be reconciled with mother earth (creation) and with all God's creatures,” Father Sosa added. The president of JDV Father Selva Rathinam welcomed Father Sosa explaining the service of the major seminary.

The JDV has 800 students and 33 professors in its faculties of Philosophy and Theology. The students represent 82 dioceses and 83 different religious congregations. Father Francis Gonsalves, Dean of theology faculty, introduced the superior general.

Jesuit's South Asian provincial and JDV vice-chancellor Father George Pattery and Papal Seminary Rector Father Bhausahab Sansare joined others to felicitate Father Sosa.

Two of his General Assistants--Father Lisbert D'Souza and Vernon D'Cunha---and Father Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves, Delegate for the International Houses in Rome, are accompanying Father Sosa.

(Taken from <http://m.ucanindia.in/news/lent-is-gift-of-joy-says-visiting-jesuit-superior-39453.html>. This homily was delivered on Ash Wednesday, March 6, 2019)

General's Visit: Lifting Up our Spirit

Jacob Kulangara

Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Arturo Sosa came to De Nobili College, Pune on 5th March 2019. He stayed in the campus until 7th afternoon. During his visit, he celebrated the Ash Wednesday mass in Papal Seminary for the whole campus, had lunch in Papal Seminary, dinner in DNC and attended several meetings with scholastics, seminarians and staff. Those were days full of activities and programmes.

Prior to his visit, DNC had a few months of planning and preparations. Many days were allotted to beautifying the house, preparing the rooms and cleaning up the campus for the visit of the General. Under the leadership of Fr. Edward (Rector), the whole house was involved in the preparation. He meticulously planned everything in minute detail in consultation with the POSA (George Pattery) and General's Assistants Frs. Lisbert and Vernon. It was nice seeing the whole house actively and tirelessly working together for a purpose. We had to do a lot of meticulous planning so that nothing was left undone. It has to be noted that the General himself was least bothered about luxury and pomp in any way. But as protocol demands, we had to make the necessary preparations. We were aware that the task was very important, and all of us took it seriously.

My personal impressions of the General and his visit are very deep and full of joy and satisfaction. It was definitely an experience of grace. As the minister of the house, I had to be with him on several occasions. Without hesitation, I would say that I cherished every moment I was with him. He is a man full of life and enthusiasm and enjoys living his life to the full. He enjoyed the company of not only the staff but also the young scholastics. He easily mingled with the scholastics; during the meal, he easily moved around with them. And scholastics took selfies with him at will. Fr. Ted eagerly awaited his visit, and it was a heart warming sight to see the two of them when they met. Fr. Ted had happily offered his room for renovation given the General's Visit. (*Contd on p. 19*)



The Joy of Lent

Arturo Sosa SJ

The Homily of Fr. General, Arturo Sosa, for JDV, Pune [Ash Wednesday — March 6, 2019]

Readings: Joel 2:12-18; Psalm 51:3-6, 12-14, 17; 2 Cor 5:20 - 6:2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

Today, Ash Wednesday, we begin the holy season of Lent. The word 'Lent' usually brings to mind rather sad and drab images of fasting, penance, abstinence, purple robes, no singing of the 'Alleluia' and 'Gloria', etc. All this makes us reluctant to begin this apparently dull and dreary season; and somehow, we hope that this season finishes quickly so that we can resume our normal, happy lives. However, if we reflect carefully on the tone of today's liturgy, and on the readings, we might change our view and our disposition for this 40-day period of Lent.

I bring to your attention one of the opening lines of the First Preface of Lent, which reads: "By your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure." Two words here are striking: gift and joy. Lent is God's gift to us, and Lent must fill us with

great joy — the joy of returning to God — the God who fills us with joy, restores us and reconciles us with Himself, with all His children, and with all His creatures.

The first reading from Prophet Joel has a loving invitation to retrace our footsteps away from our errant paths to get back to God. "Return to me with all your heart..." God invites me and you to return to Him "with all our heart", which signifies the totality of our being. How lovely it is to return to our God of Love, merciful Abba, with all our heart! The reading goes on to tell us: "God is all tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, and ready to relent. Yes, let us experience God's tender love and boundless compassion!

The second reading from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians is another invitation to become agents of reconciliation in today's broken world. It is precisely this mission which the God Of Love calls us, Jesuits, and all our co-workers, collaborators, students, benefactors and friends, to be convinced about, and committed to — that is, what Decree I of our GC 36 expresses as our common call to be: "Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice". Aware of his own sinfulness and the amazing graces he has received, Paul writes: "We are ambassadors of Christ, it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: Be reconciled to God." Paul is a man aflame with a mission. He says, "See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!" No postponements!

In the Gospel passage (according to Matthew), Jesus highlights what we must do, now, and be, now! He seems to summarize what Prophet Joel and Apostle Paul have advised us to do and be. Jesus is very precise and practical. He

suggests three spiritual disciplines, which you, in India, call 'sadhanas': prayer, fasting and alms-giving. What do these three require of us?

First and foremost, prayer, contemplation, meditation and the Eucharist bring about our reconciliation with God, Second, alms-giving makes us aware of the 'poor' — the millions of our sisters and brothers who are struggling to survive in our selfish world. True alms-giving means not only generously giving what we 'have' but who we 'are' — a self-giving. It reconciles us with all of humankind. Third, fasting creates an awareness of God's generosity through the gifts of nature. We voluntarily deprive ourselves of food and detach ourselves from the many comforts and goods which we have become so dependent upon. Fasting could help us to be reconciled with mother earth (creation) and with all God's creatures.

As we enter into this season of Lent, let us not forget these three acts of love, and let us strive for the triple reconciliation — with God, with others, and with nature. May we be mindful of Pope Francis's constant reminder that our God is a God of mercy. Hence, saying the prayer of repentant King David in today's psalm, "A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me," let us return to God with all our heart—full of joy! May our Lenten season be a time of grace and reconciliation, bringing joy and peace to all those we will encounter.

I am truly happy to begin this season of Lent here, at JDV—Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth—the 'Light of Knowledge' Academy. As "companions of Christ on a mission of reconciliation and justice", my prayer for you is that you continue being 'lights' amidst the darkness of selfishness and sin. May the knowledge we cultivate be enlightening and em-

powering for all.

I end with that beautiful prayer from the Upanishads:

"O God, from untruth, lead us to truth;

from darkness, lead us to light;

from death, lead us to eternal life,

Amen."

Rt Rev Arturo Marcelino Sosa Abascal SJ visited Papal Seminary on March 6, 2019. Even though many Generals have visited the Seminary, he is the first one to show personal concern towards working staff of the Seminary like myself. We got the great privilege of serving food to him. He was even humble enough to click a photo with the staff. We consider it a great privilege and all of us very happy that he honoured the staff during his visit. We convey our gratitude and greetings to him. -Meena Chandu Hanchamani



Jesuits' Apostolic Preferences for Today

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ

Papal Seminary, Pune

On February 19, 2019, the General of the Society of Jesus has revealed their Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) for the next 10 years. Venezuelan-born Jesuit Superior General Father Arturo Sosa, popularly known as the Black Pope, said the UAP would guide the Society of Jesus forward, inspired by the discernment of the spirits, concern for the excluded, care for the environment, and journeying with young people.

In his letter addressed to the 15,536 Jesuits worldwide, Sosa elaborated on the four guiding principles. These include the promotion of discernment and spiritual exercises, walking with the excluded, accompanying the young in their journey and caring for our common home. These are the universal apostolic preferences set by the Society of Jesus for the next decade, 2019-2029.

Approved by the Pope

These preferences are officially approved by the Pope Francis, himself a Jesuit. The universal apostolic preferences of the Jesuits “are in harmony with the current apostolic prior-

ities of the Church expressed through the ordinary magisterium of the Pope, the synods, the episcopal conferences, especially in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*,” the Pope emphasized in a letter addressed to the Jesuit General, Father Arturo Sosa on Feb 6, 2019.

What has been undertaken, the Pontiff added, is a “dynamic discernment”, not a “library or labour” process. Pope Francis stressed that the first UAP was “fundamental because it presupposes as a basic condition the relation of the Jesuit with the Lord, his personal and communitarian life of prayer and discernment.” “Without this prayerful attitude, the rest will not function,” he added in his official letter.

The Background

The apostolic preferences are the result of a process of discernment that lasted almost two years. It began with the General Congregation of the Jesuits in October 2016, that elected Fr Sosa as the 31st General of the Society of Jesus. Numerous meetings, discussions, group encounters, spiritual conversations and moments of prayerful discernment led to the selection of the preferences, which took two years in the making.

The UAP which deals with “four vital areas,” inspire Jesuits “in their discernment and in apostolic planning,” Sosa added. They are the points of reference, horizons and orientations for the entire Society of Jesus. They emphasize how Jesuits can “make better use of the means at their disposal to serve Christ's reconciling mission in the world.” They are the Jesuits’ response to the needs of the Church. These preferences were selected “through socio-political analysis, theological and pastoral reflection and discernment”.

a. Promoting discernment through spiritual exercises

Illustrating these four apostolic preferences, Fr. Sosa told Vatican News that genuine discernment is a necessity for the Church today. The Spiritual Exercises, he added, are a preferential path for the Jesuits. It is also fundamental, as far as the exercises are concerned, to take the path of creativity. According to the Jesuit General, new forms must be found so that the exercises adapt to different groups, realities and contexts.

b. Walking with the excluded

Walking with those who are discarded, said Father Sosa, means approaching the world of the poor and going to the suburbs to meet the people. “We want to take a path, he added, to promote social justice. “We want to promote a change in the economic, political and social structures that cause injustice. “We want to eliminate the scourge of abuse from the life of the Church and society,” a sad fact that the Jesuit General said is manifest out in various forms, including in sexual abuse and abuse of power.

c. Accompanying young people

According to Fr. Sosa, walking with young people also means looking at the world from their perspective. Young people, he explained, can help understand the changes in society, to grasp the sense of a new culture. We must therefore “open up spaces for young people, for their creativity”, he said, adding they must also learn from the young.

d. Caring for the common home

The fourth preference concerns our common home, this earth. Father Sosa said we must try to participate in urgent

actions that can help prevent environmental destruction. Alternative formulas and creative action must also be sought to rediscover the earth as our beloved home, which we need to protect.

Father Sosa said the UAP was unlikely to cover all bases for Jesuits in their myriad missions around the world due to the different “needs of the Church in particular territories with specific conditions.”

The Jesuit Superior General responded by writing, “we realize that unless we live The Spiritual Exercises – if we are not persons who engage in discernment – we cannot help others or contribute to others in discernment. We have to live them deeply.”

These priorities were well received by the Indian Jesuits. Fr MK George, Provincial of Kerala maintained that these priorities are “both relevant and timely.” Fr Edward Mudavassery, former Provincial of South Asia said: “Personally I am thrilled at the choice of the 4 UAP by the Society of Jesus. Undoubtedly Pope Francis has been an inspirational figure ever since he began his Pontificate to bring to focus and urgency these four areas to address the burning problems of the world and the Church.” Fr Bhausahab Sansare, Rector, Papal Seminary says the preferences reflect the optimism that the society feels for the world, in spite of the challenges. He added that “we can collectively be part of the solution.” Fr George Pattery, President of South Asian Assistancy, reiterates that “UAP the mood and sentiments of our times and holds hope and courage for the youth, especially in viewing secularizaion as 'signs of the time' and a critique of 'religious world'. That our Earth is a common home provides a large frame work for all religions and cultures to work together. the marginalized are part of

this common home.”

The General is visiting Mumbai, Goa and Pune in March 2019. Fr Selva Rathinam, President, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth is “excited to have the presence of Fr General, who will enlighten us more on these preferences both in words and deeds.” [From *The Smart Companion*]

Sijmplicity, Humility and Joy

Certain date and person cannot be erased from my life. One such person is superior general of Society of Jesus, Very Rev Fr Arturo Sosa, and the date is on 6th of March 2019. I had a long desire of seeing the black pope (excuse me for using the term which Very Rev Fr Arturo Sosa, may not like much), this desire become a reality on 6th of March. I did not speak with him personally. I, being a Papalite had the privilege of listening to him twice: firstly during the mass, next in the papal seminary hall where he addressed the papal seminary community. Apart from it I had the privilege of observing his moves and steps in and around the campus. In all these situations, I never came across the person called Superior General of Society of Jesus, rather a simple ALTER CHRISTUS. I mean the statement what I made. I saw in him the divine virtues which make a great leader to be the servant of God. Simplicity and humility of, Very Rev Fr Arturo Sosa, challenges me to encounter the pride and modernity within myself. The passion for the Church and for Christ is clearly seen in his homily and in the address which he gave to the Papal Seminary community. Another important aspect which I liked and loved in him was the Spirit of Pope Francis which he carries through his conduct and through his homilies. He emphasised the virtue of joy and indeed he left behind to all of the joy. I can now proudly say that I have met another living Christ in my life. I pray that church may form lot more Fr Arturo Sosa, to the world

-Joseph Mathalai Muthu



Experiences and Impressions of Fr. General's Visit

Edward Mudavassery SJ

Rector, De Nobili College

De Nobili College (DNC), Pune, was the base from where Fr. General carried out his visit to JDV Campus. Naturally, DNC was spruced up to welcome him. The whole community had gathered at the Grotto in front of DNC to welcome him with Marathi shawl and Peshwa turban and the Chotanagapur Adivasi drums and dance. This was his first visit to DNC which houses the largest number of Jesuit scholastics under one roof! As he got off the car in which he was traveling with the general assistants, Frs. Vernon D'Cunha and Lisbert D'Souza, he put us at ease by his broad and gentle smile and a warm embrace. I had known him for several years in Rome, his becoming General had not changed his warm human qualities. He merged into the Jesuit crowd as if it were homecoming! He seemed to carry lightly on his shoulders the burden of his important job. His general demeanour put everyone at ease. He obliged the young men to take Selfies with him when they approached him. He was a good listener and when he spoke, he spoke frankly and honestly. He did not shy away from the problems the Society or the Church were facing; lack of vocations, many scandals and the downward slide in our credibility. He stressed the need to select candidates carefully. Quoting the Constitutions Part 5, Ch. 2: [516] he said, "No one will be

admitted to any degree of belonging unless he is judged fit in the Lord. For profession it means, thorough screening through protracted and exacting tests, and clearance from the General, who will have reports from other superiors and individuals whom he has asked to testify.” He pointed out that the time of Formation is also the time of Probation, and only when one has fulfilled the requirements of a particular stage, he should be allowed to move to the next.

He said that our primary vocation is to consecrated life; priesthood is only one of the means. In the Society coadjutor brothers and priests are primarily consecrated persons. They are incorporated into a community of consecrated persons and can be sent on mission. The most important moment for a Jesuit is the Final Vows and not ordination or diaconate. In the Formula of the vows, the requirement to be a member of the Society is that you “understand all things according to the Constitution.”

During his interaction with the Scholastics, he pointed out the importance of unity of our life and mission. He said that some Jesuits considered mission as work. They were very busy doing many things; they gave minimum time for community and prayer. He cited the example of our founding fathers at Venice, while they were waiting to go to Jerusalem. Their work was followed by prayer, Eucharist and spiritual conversations (communal discernment) and vice versa. Some people ask why one should be a Jesuit if the same work can be done by laypersons? For the Jesuits, the process is more important than the projects and the results.

The unity of life and mission and discernment are gifts given to the Society by the Holy Spirit (I suppose it means the special Charism of the Society.). This helps us to live as friends in the Lord, superiors, directors of works, prin-

cipals, deans and other members of the community. It is our responsibility to safeguard this gift in the Society. It is in this context, the recent General Congregations have stressed the community itself as mission because it is in the community we experience this triple unity. Community as mission draws from the unity of life and mission. He urged, let us be an active and positive member of the community. Some tend to give minimum time for the community. However, a Jesuit community is a dynamic group. We change regularly according to the needs of the mission. Our life of unity will be manifest in the way we celebrate the Eucharist. The disciples of Emmaus recognized the Lord at the breaking of the bread, they ran back to Jerusalem to share their experience with the others. Formation must help us to grow in this unity of life and mission.

Discernment in common: A Jesuit must not have any attachment to any place or anyone. They offered themselves to the Pope to be sent out on mission to any part of the world. Some Jesuits these days tend to get attached to work, province, place etc. In the Society we do not ask, ‘what do you like?’ It is an order. We search and find God’s will and follow it. The superior, who gives the order, pays attention to ‘cura personalis and cura apostolica’, the persons and the circumstances. The superior is responsible for the life and mission of the person. Creativity is necessary and it is a gift from the Holy Spirit. Persons, places and circumstances have to be taken into consideration. Mission is not individualistic; there must be discernment between creativity and obedience.

He continued that we are entering into an era of change in the Society and the Church. The Pope has endorsed the Universal Apostolic Preferences as also Church’s preferences.

Now we must take responsibility for these preferences whether it is development, ecology, migration or the youth. We need to make changes in our personal and institutional life; e.g. use of plastic, water, energy, consumerism etc. By the practice of Spiritual Conversation and Communal Discernment UAP must impact us to form enduring attitudes and praxis in our life and mission.

Jesuit ministries are always learned ministries. Discernment and ministries are backed up by intellectual depth. Therefore, mediocrity is not an option for the Jesuits. When we teach or preach we must ask ourselves “what about us?”. We must walk the talk if we want to be credible. (Jesus always asked his disciples to follow him!) Jesus is the only way for us. He has not given us an easy task. If we follow in his footsteps we may have to pay a very high price, even with our life.

In order to stay the course in our life and mission, we must follow the practice recommended by St. Ignatius, Daily Examen. Besides personal Examen, there must be community and Institutional Examens also. We cannot expect personal, community and institutional transformation if we neglect daily Examen.

Fr. General planted a tree at the premises of the Marian Grotto at DNC. The scholastics made sure that all the materials used for the welcome and the decorations were eco-friendly. Fr. General visited also DNC’s “Pope Francis’ Herbal Garden”. On 6th March at 7.00 am Fr. General blessed the “Centre for Ignatian Spirituality and Research” at De Nobili College. All these in some way were pointing to UAP in practice for the coming ten years or so. AMDG



Rev Fr General No Pomp and Show

VM Jose SJ

Papal Seminary, Pune

On 6th March 2019, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus visited Papal Seminary, Pune. On Ash Wednesday, he celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the Papal Seminary chapel for the whole campus and the JDV students.

I personally was eagerly waiting for his visit to Papal Seminary. I had only heard about him and his simplicity and casual way of dealing. When I met him, I realized that he is really a genuine, humble and ordinary person. Humility is the best way to keep oneself grounded and of this Earth. Humility is infectious. It has a magical quality to endear one to all. It starts with thoughts pure and serene. Humility is the essence of being human. Anyone can talk to him freely without considering his status. When he came to Pune, he was dressed in Pants and Kurta. He very easily adjusted himself to the place and situation. One of my desires was to have a photo with him. Of course, I did have several photos with him. It was like a dream come true in my life after I met him. I developed a deeper love for the Society of Jesus as I understood that the General is such a simple soul. I felt the desire to give back to the community a new sense of life, love, and spirit.

I must admit that it was a joyful experience meeting him and spending time with him. People like him can make a difference in the community and society. What is inspiring is that such great personalities can be such simple persons. No pomp and show were required to welcome him in our midst. The sharing that we had with him was also a learning experience. It was nice hearing from him news and information from Rome. Some people may think when great personalities come we wait for them to go back soon so that we have less tensions. However, according to me, I wished that he would stay longer with us.

While the experiences I have had during the visit have been spectacular, I have learned to truly value them and appreciate the Society. The Society of Jesus and persons like the General have enriched my life with his passion for learning and devotion to people.

A Prophet for Today

When I listened to Fr. General and interacted with him, I felt that he was truly a prophet. He was concerned of the poor and simple humans beings around us. He was truly rooted in prayer. He was deeply shaped by the traditions of the Society of Jesus.

He inspired us. Challenged us. And guided us. He reminded me of the Rev Fr Pedro Arrupe, whom I deeply admire. May Fr Arturo Sosa lead countless people to God through love and freedom!

Vincent Crasta SJ