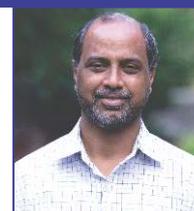
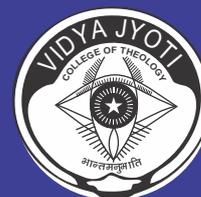


VJ TODAY

(Doing Theology with Open Eyes)



Message from the Principal

(Principal's Inaugural Address — Monday, July 10, 2017)

It is a moment of great privilege and honour for me to address staff and students at this memorable event of the Inaugural Day of the academic year 2017-2018 of Vidyajyoti College of Theology.

At the outset I would like to thank Cardinal Joseph Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome for granting *nihil obstat* (25 April 2017, Prot N. 321/2017) to my appointment as the Principal of Vidyajyoti College of Theology. I also thank the Chancellor Fr. Arturo Sosa Abascal, Superior General of the Society of Jesus for his good wishes (IDA 2017 /07, 06 July 2017) and the Vice chancellor Fr. George Pattery for entrusting me with the ministry of leadership in the Faculty. With God's grace and the co-operation of you staff colleagues, co-workers and student friends, I hope to carry out my responsibility to the best of my ability. Thank you, Fr Rector, for your words of welcome and appreciation.

We have begun this Academic Year with the great desire of "Doing Theology with Open Eyes" with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by the Patron of our College Archbishop Anil J. T. Couto. The patron's presence is always an occasion of grace for all of us. We thank him immensely. Before I introduce and welcome our new professors and officials I would like to place on record our gratitude to Fr. Leonard Fernando, the outgoing Principal, for his valuable services both as Professor and Principal of Vidyajyoti College of Theology. Currently, he is appointed as the Rector of St. Joseph's College, Thiruchirapalli. We wish him all the best and good health.

A few other changes have taken place among the officials of Vidyajyoti. VJ has been blessed this year with two additional staff members – Frs. Cornelius Ekka and Ceaser D' Cunha. Fr. Cornelius Ekka after finishing doctoral studies in Church History at Franzens Leopold University, Innsbruck, Austria joins us afresh, to share his knowledge with us. Fr. Ceaser was a spiritual guide to the Jesuit scholastics at De Nobili College, Pune. We welcome and wish both of them many years of fruitful service at VJ and great success in their academic endeavours.

Fr. Medard Xalxo who served seven years as the student counselor in the College is transferred to Satya Nilayam, Chennai. Fr. Edwin Rodrigues after completion of Tertianship, left for Germany on June 5th to pursue his doctoral studies in Sacred Scripture at St. Georgen, Frankfurt. Fr. Josph Puthenkulam after spending a few months in Atmadarshan, Patna has returned. He will be with us till the end of August and then go to Rome, for doctoral studies. Fr. Anil D' Almeida will be in the Faculty till the end of August and then proceeds to Boston, the United States of America for PhD in Indological studies.



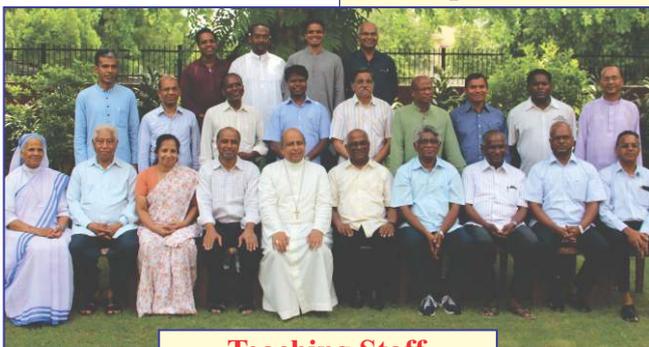
*With the Blessing of
Pope Francis*

The Newsletter
VJ TODAY
is a new initiative of
the students of Vidyajyoti
College of Theology.

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Report of the Inauguration of the Academic Year 2017-2018



Teaching Staff

West Bengal. It has not only had its abode at different places – Asansol, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Delhi but also enjoyed varied statuses in its life – as a Seminary, College, Faculty. Let me place before you my dreams and concerns of VJ in the form of four pillars.

First Pillar: VJ provides an atmosphere of worship and learning where a sense of calling is tested and defined, where Scripture and the Christian tradition are appropriated in critical interaction with experience and context, where faith and intellect mature and life-long friendships begin, and where habits of discipleship are so nourished that members of the community learn to proclaim with conviction, courage, wisdom, and love the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Second Pillar: VJ is a Catholic Jesuit theology faculty, an identity we embrace proudly as an essential source of wisdom and strength for our mission. It is an ecumenical, intercultural, and interreligious community and we hold Christ as the center of our life together. The intellectual preparation of the students for ministry is the reason for the existence of VJ. St. Ignatius of Loyola made faith the starting point of education. St. Ignatius of Loyola as early as 1551, stressed formation for life rather than the acquisition of knowledge. For him faith was not a blind acceptance of tradition, but a constant listening to God – “obedience of faith” and “hearing from below”. Sravana leads to manana (meditation), to minds that can argue both in defense and critique of tradition and finally to nidhidhyasana (contemplation).

Third Pillar: A vital dimension of the learning experience at VJ isn't only confined to the VJ campus. The world itself is our classroom, and students extend their learning in many locations in the National Capital Region through field experiences and direct contact with the urban poor: slum dwellers, rickshaw pullers, children on the street, domestic working women, and through dharnas, visiting the prison, pilgrimages, and academic exchange programmes. The essence of VJ is its impulse towards innovation and transformation.

Fourth Pillar: The development of a quality educational system largely lies in the commitment of the members of the faculty, quality infrastructure, supportive administration, large pool of learning resources and last but not the least, hardworking and brilliant students. You will be glad to hear that our college primarily focuses on making our students good human beings at the service of humankind, especially the poor and needy.

Finally, I appeal to all of you to make your stay at Vidyajyoti and in Delhi a fruitful one, a meaningful one, and a beneficial one. Many and great are the challenges before us. But with the grace of God and our generous cooperation we dare to meet them. May I commend all of us to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Fr. PR John SJ
Principal



Students' Council 2017-2018

Hungarian Jesuits - Sweet Memories in India



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I like to share with you some of my feelings and experiences, which I treasured in India. At first, when my provincial proposed the idea of my visiting India, deep in my heart I felt that I must go to India. Then I responded to him that I was interested to have a good experience in this land of various cultures and religions. I browsed the Google to know more about this land. I was worried how I would to manage the climate, the food, the culture, and so on? However, I tried to understand this as an invitation or a call of God, to live my Jesuit vocation in a deeper way and to trust in him, to trust in others, and to trust in myself as well.

I would like to highlight my experiences as three levels. The first one is that I experienced the warm welcome of the Vidyajyoti community and the College! Though I am coming from another culture, there is something common among us because we share the same spirituality, the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Especially I experienced it during the week of the novena. I enjoyed each one's company and had the privilege to stay as a member of a big community. I received a lot of care, support and encouragement from all the members of the community. Indeed I was blessed to have you all in my life and I cherish each moment of my life that I stayed with you.

My second experience was to witness other religions, their customs, traditions and their patterns of worship which exist side by side. Living together, I mean, by people of different religions is natural but it is a new reality for me. It was nice to see how Jesuits are able to relate to this reality in a dialogical way. I consider that this a learning experience, which will help me in my priestly formation.

The third one is something more personal. With Fr. Ferenc, we visited several fieldworks; we saw the needs of the poor, the poverty, the problems of the society and so on. Several times I felt bad in these places that I could not help them, and I could not resolve all of these difficulties! So I learnt to trust in God, and to try to see all these things with his eyes, because somehow He will change and transform the world. The question which rises in me is how I become his instrument to promote and uphold human dignity.

Thank you very much, dear friends. Thanks especially to Fr. PR John, who invited me to have a memorable experience in my life. I invite all of you to our province, and everyone is welcome. Thank you!

*Sch. Arpad SJ
(Hungarian Province)*



Quintessence of a Journey – in the Land Where Everyone and Everything has a place

After having stayed in India for a month, visiting different places, I am delighted to write something of my experiences in a few words. I like to share with you, dear friends, the quintessence of my journey in India. At I.G. Airport (Delhi), Sch. Antony Prabhu picked me up with a warm welcome and a pleasant smile. As we moved towards the accommodation (VJ College), I saw cows everywhere. Poor people slept on the ground dreaming; rickshaws, motorbikes, 'triangle' taxis (autos), cars, bicycles, trucks, buses busied on the road most of them honking all the time. Huge wheel barrows carried the vendor's goods in various directions. I wondered: what a busy life it is! What a free life in India! Several days later, I attended a lecture where the professor said: "In India everyone has a place". When I heard this statement, I remembered my journey from the airport to Vidyajyoti. I recollected everything in my mind.

On the second day, a cockroach appeared in my room. Usually in Hungary I collect cockroaches with a glass and then release them somewhere. But this was more than twice as big as my glass. The professor's statement came to my mind: in India, everyone has a place, so do the cockroach. I collected it with a bucket. Visiting different religious temples, shrines and churches, and seeing verities of devotees, pilgrims, and seekers, I perceived that these people are on the move to experience the divine and searching for spiritual enlightenment. Though my visit was limited to very few places, I could experience warmth and love from every corner of the country. Thanks to you, and to thanks India, I've begun to learn this powerful message of love; "everyone (and everything) has a place". I Thank God for the beautiful experiences and I meet you all in my daily prayer.

Fr. Ferenc Laszlo Horvath SJ (Hungarian Province)

Report of the Inauguration of the Academic Year 2017-2018



The inauguration of the academic year 2017 - 2018 was punctuated with a number of meaningful activities that set the tone for the year. It began with the Mass of the Holy Spirit, presided over by the patron of Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Most, Rev. Archbishop Anil Couto. His Grace dwelt on the theme of the year, "Doing theology with open eyes". He added an important dimension of doing theology on ones knees, a reference to the role of faith in the endeavour of doing theology. The second part of the day's proceedings was a thanksgiving programme to honour the outgoing Principal, Fr. Leonard Fernando SJ. Sr. Divya, a student, Fr. Anthony Valan SJ, Professor of Scripture, Fr. Michael Thanaraj SJ, Rector of Vidyajyoti and Fr. P.R. John SJ, Principal of Vidyajyoti expressed sentiments of appreciation and gratitude for his many years of selfless service to the cause of the Church and society.

Fr. Rector exhorted the staff and students to give themselves fully to the study of theology. He particularly stressed the intellectual and human expectations of their stage of priestly formation. Fr. Principal, then shared his vision for the college for the coming year. He highlighted 'four pillars' of what it means to do theology. He emphasized the sacred nature of doing theology as well as the connective nature of the study of theology. Our faith and reflection must lead us to action for those whom we have opted to serve with preference.

The evening session was an enlightening lecture by Prof. Dr. Shiv Visvanathan, a social scientist of high repute. He was invited to share his thoughts on the implications and challenges of the emerging Hindu Rashtra. He minced no words as he reflected on the gravity of the current situation. His challenge was to both social scientists and theologians, to create the categories to engage the culture of extreme and narrow nationalism. He stressed the need to steer clear of polemics and trading blows. Dialogue and an intellectual engagement among those in civil society could be a starting point. The session was moderated by Fr. Rudolf Heredia SJ who threw light on the pressing need to engage in an alternative narrative rather than a mere counter narrative in our task of social analysis and theologizing. The proceedings of the day provided the dynamic within which the staff and students of Vidyajyoti can venture forth in the endeavor of Doing Theology with Open Eyes.



Sch. Dean Fernandes SJ (B.Th. III)



Report on Black Day on 10th August 2017

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) has designated August 10 to be observed as 'Black Day' and called for demonstrations to be organized to show solidarity with Dalit Christians and Muslims who are denied the rights which are given to Hindu Dalits. The Black Day was observed on 10 August 2017 from 4.30 to 5.30 pm at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. It was organized by Fr. Z. Devasagayaraj, Secretary, SC/BC Commission of CBCI, with NCCI and NCDC. Most Rev. Anil Couto, the Archbishop of Delhi, was among the Christian and Muslim leaders who participated in the protest. 'The Union Government should come forward to resolve the issue without further delay. The Union Government should give an appropriate reply to the query of the Supreme Court, based on the recommendation of Justice Ranganath Misra Commission's report.' This was the demand of the protest. From VJ, the Principal, staff and many students actively participated in the protest. The students of VJ joined their voices in a resounding social awareness song on emancipating the Dalits and minorities. Most Rev. Anil Couto, and other dignitaries addressed the gathering, encouraging the people not to give up the fight for the rights of Dalit Christians and Muslims. Students of VJ were in the forefront raising slogans against injustice done to the Dalit Christians and Muslims. Representatives from the Muslim community too participated in the protest.



Sch. P. James Raja SJ (B. Th III)

Vidyajyoti Fieldwork Experiences



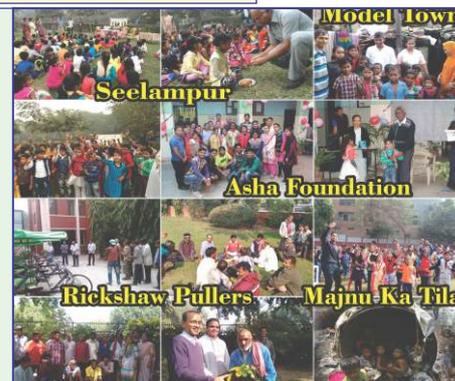
Vidyajyoti is committed to seek eternal Light that is Life, to reflect on it and to let it shine in new human insights and expressions.

Vidyajyoti is more than an academic institution. It is a way of life designed to form men and women dedicated to the service of others, who let the inner Divine Light shine out through them. It means engaging in activities in the neighborhood and the city at large whereby staff and students are challenged to greater awareness, stimulated in the process of theological reflection and enabled to render community service to others. A discerning participation in diverse educational, cultural and social programmes and events of the city is a part of the overall formation which Vidyajyoti seeks to promote.

The training given here aims at the integral formation of men and women for the selfless service of the people, especially the weaker sections of society, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. In sum, Vidyajyoti seeks an organic unity in the whole training by a balanced development of the cultural, spiritual, affective and intellectual life. By such strivings it hopes to be true to its motto, "to reflect the one who alone shines."

The ministries are branched out in various fields which can be chiefly categorised under Parish ministry, Urban Poor (Street Children, Rickshaw Pullers, Slums), Hospital Ministry, Tribal Ministry, Tihar Ashram, Moving to Public Space, NECCOD, SAMAG.

Sch. G. Jesus Vivian Raja SJ (B.Th. II)



Moving to Public Space / Pearls on Streets

Moving to Public Space, one of the recently introduced ministries at Vidyajyoti, has made an impact on the students of theology. It is a ministry where Public Space is given prime importance. Public Space is a forum where Public Intellectuals of Delhi and of the Country raise issues of international, national and local interest through their expert analysis of the situation. They challenge every participant to question the happenings locally and across the globe. It is not a mere lecture session but an intellectual and thought provoking forum. It questions the participants' awareness of the situation, or as Socrates would put it, the ignorance of oneself, whether one is able to grasp what is actually happening or what the issue is all about. Six of us are assigned to this field. However this does not remain at the thought level. The engagement in the Public Space leads protest walks, dharnas, etc, and hopefully in near future will lead to voicing out our opinion issues through internet and social networking sites.

Sch. Malcolm SJ (B.Th.II)



In Delhi there are thousands of children living on the streets in very pathetic and inhuman conditions. Most of them ran away from their homes in different states and are now addicted to drugs and exposed to abuse and exploitation. They lose their precious childhood in the filthy life on the streets. They are deprived of the basic necessities and facilities. Some pick up empty bottles and sell them, while others beg to survive. They live under the bridges and flyovers amidst dangers of all sorts. We, as a group, go there and interact with them cordially. We listen to them and even play with them. We also celebrate some feasts with them and make them feel that they too are God's sons and daughters. We organize Bal Mela for them and distribute clothes. We also try to rehabilitate them and encourage them to return to their homes. But our interactions with the children are not that easy as they are most often under the influence of drugs. Because of these problems we often fail to keep a continuous relationship with them. But spending time with these so called Least, Last and Lost of society, we learn not to be greedy, to live in hope, to smile, to work hard, to have ambitions in life and emerge as total winners in life.

Bro. Bhagya Raju (B.Th. II)



Suicide of Farmers?



Farmers' Protest at Jantar Mantar



Expressing Our Solidarity With the Farmers



Jal, Jungle and Jamin



Attentive Listeners



The protest by the farmers of Tamil Nadu in March 2017 to support agriculture and farming awakened the people of India. The protest was organized in various ways and lasted for 41 days: the farmers were led by Mr. Ayyakannu, the president of the Association of the Farmers of South India, have been conducting mock funerals, eating rats, blowing conches, rolling on the ground half naked, shaving their heads and protesting with the skulls of farmers who allegedly committed suicide.

The protest was withdrawn by the farmers with the assurance by Mr. Edappadi Palanisamy, the CM of Tamil Nadu to fulfill the demands of the farmers. Having waited for 75 days, the farmers have not received any response from the state government, and so, the second phase of the agitation started on 16th July 2017 in Jantar Mantar, Delhi led by Mr. Ayyakannu. This agitation has the same motto of the first phase to get due support for agriculture and fulfill the demands of the farmers. On 25th July 2017, the staff and the students of Vidyajyoti College of Theology went to Jantar Mantar to support the farmers' genuine demands for agriculture and extended our support to them by visiting and distributing meals. Seeing the elderly farmers who were struggling to face the inconveniences every day and protesting for the future generations, we felt that we, the younger generation of today have to learn and to imbibe the spirit of fighting for a common cause.

Sch. Velankanni SJ (B.Th. III)

Indigenous People's Day Lecture



The college organized a seminar on the occasion of Indigenous day, with the theme 'The Constitutional and Legal Status of Adivasis in India' on 14 August 2017. The resource persons were Fr. Nicholas Barla and Fr. Ranjit Tigga. Fr. Milianus Beck, the chair person initiated the seminar by highlighting the hard life situation of the tribals of Chotanagpur today, whose life was actually blissful once. Their heart beat is of Jal, Jungle and Jamin. Dr. Nicholas Barla, through his speech, expressed the identity crisis of the tribals as the government of India denies the presence of the Indigenous people. Education, transport, power and water supply are unfulfilled desires of the tribals even today.

Dr. Barla also said that the beauty of our nation lies in Unity in Diversity; therefore, as Indians, all need to consider the problems of the tribals and raise their voice against the injustice done to them. Fr. Ranjit Tigga, explained the life situation of the tribals from a theological perspective; for the tribal land is God's gift and is equal to temple, religion, Mother, life and identity. About 76.8% of the Adivasis are occupied with agriculture, for them land means everything, but now the land is being occupied by non-tribals and government imposes Tax on tribals. He also noted that in their life struggle, the Jesuit missionaries empowered them to fight against injustice. After the presentation, there was an interaction section. It was an enriching experience for all of us. We came to know the problems of the tribals. It is our responsibility to be united in hearts and minds to raise our voice against the injustice done to our tribal brethren.

Sr. James Arul Mary MSI (B.Th. III)

Academic: Theologizing



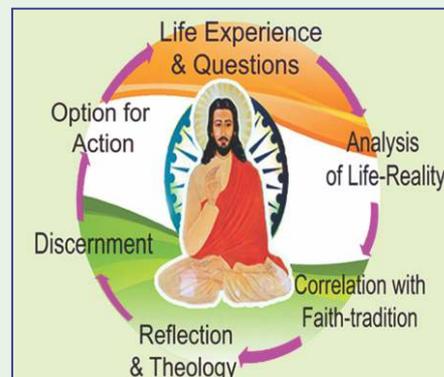
God within History and the Response of Faiths

“The wasteland will become fertile and the fields will produce rich crops.” Is. 32 : 15

The capital’s largest land fill/dumping yard Bhalswa is in North East Delhi. Hundreds of ragpickers climb a 100 foot high trash pile daily to earn their livelihood, most of them coming from Bihar, Bengal, and Odisha, and staying there for a long time.

For me the dumping yard experience was very unique and it disturbed me a lot. While in the auto I mistook the monstrous heap of waste for a natural hill. However, coming nearer I was shocked at the huge heap filled with garbage. As we entered, the odour of the rot and the buzzing of the flies indicated that I was in a slum, where the less fortunate people of Delhi live. Becoming more and more aware of where I was, I silently climbed towards the pinnacle of the dumping yard. Thousands of people who reside near the Bhalswa Dumping yard suffer from various heart-related illness and respiratory issues. But the human-made hill has also given them a means for survivals.

Due to poverty and unemployment they have travelled from far to earn their livelihood. They have no choice but to work in the unhygienic conditions. It was not just a day’s experience for me but a dynamic and continuous process. Many would be working there even at this moment, as I write this reflection. The experience has helped me to enter into the shoes of the poor. It was an eye opener for me as I commenced my contextual theology, i.e., “DOING THEOLOGY WITH OPEN EYES”.



Sr. Mary Sanjukta JMJ (B.Th. I)



God in Jesus Christ, Church and Sacraments!

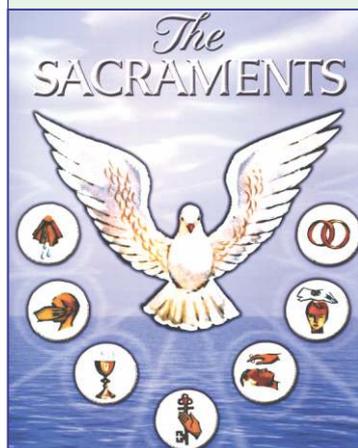
We began our theological search with a specific focus: “God in Jesus Christ, the Church and the Sacraments.” The courses in the first term (Indian Religious Texts, Gospel of John, Prophets, Gospel of Matthew, Passion Narratives, Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Pneumatology and Acts of the Apostles) helped us to begin our reflection on ‘God in Jesus Christ’ in the light of prophetic revelation, gospels according to John and Matthew, Islamic understanding of God, Mohammad and Jesus as prophets and the Indian religious and cultural context.

Studies in Islam and Indian religions, Pneumatology and Acts of the Apostle helped us to become aware of the saving act of God in the Church, in other religions and in the world at large. The study of Prophets in the Indian context of caste and other social issues helped us to understand our prophetic call in relation to the demands of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus.

The course on the Gospel according to John highlighted Jesus’ option for the poor, the oppressed and the outcast and invited us to appreciate his life-giving mission leading to his passion-death-resurrection that brings redemption. The Gospel according to Matthew comforted and encouraged us as it is the gospel of Presence, in which, Jesus, the Emmanuel, has promised to be with us till the end of the ages and through the Holy Spirit.

We, thus, enjoyed reflecting on the presence and action of the One God in and through His Word and Spirit in human relationships, the Church, religions and in the world.

Bro. Arockia (B.Th. II)



Christians in the World



The inaugural theme — “Doing Theology with Open Eyes,” — brought us back from our holidays into the contextual mode of Theology that we have been doing at Vidyajyoti. The overarching theme of the third year, ‘Christians in the World,’ was introduced to us with all its dimensions. Our search for wisdom in the merging of the text and context began with the course on ‘Wisdom Literature.’ The course brought us to identify the hidden wisdom in our day-to-day experiences besides enlightening us on the wisdom contained in the biblical texts of Wisdom Books. Wisdom is an inexhaustible and boundless process that calls us to engage in a continuous search.

Rapid developments are happening in various fields from Geology to Astronomy. The courses, ‘Bio-medical Ethics,’ ‘Human and Christian Virtues’ helped us to know and appreciate of the Catholic perspectives on many, developments in the fields of medicine, moral science, and Christian Virtues. Virtue Ethics helped us to think with the Church and to move beyond with certain liberty.

The course on ‘Christian Spirituality’ enhanced our knowledge of many spiritual masters. Spirituality includes promotion of justice and peace. The course on Ecumenism aided us to open our minds to perceive the various ways in which Christ our Lord is worshipped and to view our liturgical celebrations in an integral way. It was a great joy to listen to our Shepherd, Archbishop Anil Couto who took the course for us. He took an extra step in arranging a discourse by Mrs. Sherly Lal, Secretary of the Bible Society, besides helping us with his experiential knowledge of Ecumenism! The course on Contemporary Indian Thought mainly focused on the Hindutva movement. We realized how the movement threatens harmony in our country and why we need to fight against this spreading poison in our nation. All these courses are aimed at equipped us to venture into the world and to see the world from the optic of Christ.



Sch. Antony Prabhu SJ (B.Th. III)



Cultural Celebration of Onam

(We had the cultural celebration of Onam on 4 September 2017 in honour of all the brothers and sisters from Kerala, called God’s own Country. The celebration consists of a cultural dance, followed by a message by Fr. Poulouse Mangai, SJ. We thank and appreciate all those who made it a meaningful one.)

The Message of Fr. Poulouse Mangai SJ

Dear friends, at the very outset, I wish you all, men and women, young and old, without discrimination of any sort, the joys and blessings of the feast of Thiru Onam.

One thing I am sure of in the future map of Maveli’s land, there will be no place like Gorakhpur where dozens of children died because of the irresponsible behavior of people in positions of authority. In the future rule of Maveli, no child, no young man will die. All will enjoy long life, which they will all live to the full. It will be a land of safety, security, equality and prosperity. It will be a time of abundance, of truth, and of fraternal love. All this will be possible because God is good, the land is resourceful, people will work hard, and the government will care about the wellbeing of the last. These blessings of Onam belong truly and in its fullness only to the future. But their anticipated celebration, even annually, increases our joy and fill us with hope. In this joy and with this hope, we commit ourselves to bringing about today, in partial ways but with increased momentum, what the festival of Onam dreams of and signifies.

Once again, to one and all, the festal and fraternal greetings of Onam. May God bless us.



*Fr. Poulouse Mangai, SJ
(Professor of Systematic Theology)*