Dear Staff, students, well wishers of Vidyajyoti,

We thank our God for the year 2017 and seek God’s blessings for the year 2018. In 2017, we encountered mixed feelings and emotions of joys and sorrows. Largely, we were led into the stream of theologizing by partaking in many activities both within the institute and on the streets of Delhi besides attending seminars at the reputed intellectual public spaces. I wish that as Vidyajyoti family, may we grow more and more after the great ideals of Fr. Pedro Arrupe who wrote while shifting St. Mary’s College to Delhi as Vidyajyoti in the year 1971: “In historic Delhi, capital of the nation, home of the Union legislature, executive and judiciary, teeming with a cosmopolitan population, you will have many opportunities for cooperation with other academic centers and religious organizations, Catholic and non-Catholic, such as the Indian Social Institute, the All-India Association for Christian Higher Education, and the Delhi and Nehru Universities, to mention just a few. It is my hope that these contacts will be of benefit to all parties concerned.” Let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. Mazroor Ahmed and Dinesh Prasad officially retired from the library after rendering their invaluable service for forty-one years; Fr. Francis Ezhakunnel after one and half years of dedicated service as the Registrar of Vidyajyoti reverted to his province. We welcome Fr. Antony R. Raj as our new Registrar; Fr. Milianus Beck will be the new Director of Fieldwork.

Late Fr. Cornelius Ekka’s sudden demise led us into the experience of life and death. His mischievous smile and hearty laughter will not be heard any longer, and the institute is without a Church Historian and Ecclesiologist. On 19th October 2017, in the evening he went to St. Xavier’s School ground to play football. A few minutes into the game he complained of chest pain. The scholastics asked him to rest a while. But he chose to continue with the game. A few minutes later he found he could no longer play. He stopped playing and started to walk out. While walking out he collapsed. Immediately he was rushed to Sant Paramananda Hospital and there he was declared dead at 6.16 p.m. His Death is a great loss for us all. Our hope is in the Lord! Let our prayer be…..

“Grant O Lord, to Fr. Cornelius your Servant and Priest
now that his short life is past the glorious evening that shall last;
that by a holy death attained. Eternal glory may be gained”. Amen

Fr. P. R. John SJ (Principal)
To be contextual and relevant to the current state of affairs of India, the third year students of Vidyajyoti College under the guidance of Fr. P.R. John, S.J., Principal, Vidyajyoti College set out to be part of a fortnight campaign masterminded by Mr. Harsh Mander, a credible social activist along with Dr. John Dayal and some committed men and women. Not only to remain knowledgeable about the situation in India but also to respond to the intense hatred of the fundamentalists and saffron ridden of India in an adequate manner we perceived the clarion call of our Principal with the overarching theme: THE SITUATION OF THE WORLD AND THE RESPONSE OF WORLD RELIGIONS.

It was at that time when we came to know of the call from former civil servant, Govt. of India Mr. Harsh Mander, a deeply committed Human Rights Activist to join the journey of Mohabbat, to go and witness the troubled areas of our country. Though we could not be part of the whole campaign we spent ten days going from Delhi to Haryana, U.P., Rajasthan and Gujarat. These are the places affected by religious riots, caste and gender based violence, which can be generalized as anti-minority acts chiefly promoted by the fundamentalist groups, commonly known as the Hindutva forces. Our college swiftly responded to the call and readily offered hands to join the journey of atonement and love, known as Karwan e Mohabbat. Of course, the Karwan experience was an opportunity to explore the minds and hearts of the victimized to conscientise and invigorate them to respond to those who terrorize the innocent, by violent attacks of the Gaurakshaks. For the culmination of the noble campaign which took place in Porbandar, Gujarat, the birth place of Gandhi on 2nd October, Arun Lucas SJ, a third year student went as a representative. The culmination of the campaign is only material but the spirit of Karwan e Mohabbat can never cease to act in all those who are affected. The fire has already kindled other fires on the way to carry the message of Mohabbat where it is absent and controlled. The closing of the campaign in Gandhi’s birthplace is only symbolic because the revolution always is possible if the spirit perceives.

To be truthful to the saying, ‘our studies within four walls will not be complete if we are not part of the lives of poor and marginalized’, we the seven students which included 4 Jesuits and 3 IMS brothers went through the experience which enriched us beyond measure. We saw with open eyes (as per the theme of the year) all the pain, suffering and brokenness of those powerless people, especially our Muslim brothers and sisters. Certainly we have now an authentic background of the picture of India to share with the VJ family and the rest of the nation based on first hand information. No doubt now that our seminar paper can be rich enough to share with all those shining eye witnesses.

It was also a great opportunity to learn and get submerged in the context with the distinguished team that consisted of several journalists, social activists, columnists, photographers, a scientist, etc. Fr. P. R. John was with us in Ahmedabad besides being with the team in Delhi whenever we gathered. We were also fondly called as co-pilgrims, as singing priests because of our ability to sing certain socially awakening songs during the public hearings and meetings.

Sch. L.R. Arun, SJ (B.Th. III)
Karam is a traditional feast of the tribals of the Chhotanagpur. This feast is celebrated in the month of September. On this day people worship God in the form of three branches of the Karam tree. The myth goes down the centuries, when the tribals believed that God saved them from the enemy with the help of branches of the Karam tree and the Karam Raja brings prosperity in the life of the people as it brought to their ancestors. The three branches of the Karam tree symbolize the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in our Christian context. We believe that Jesus died on the wood and saved humanity, similarly God saved the tribals with the branches of the Karam tree. On this feast day unmarried girls are offered to the Lord so that they can get good spouses and bear children.

Karam feast was celebrated in Vidyajyoti on 10th September, 2017. The members of the Chhotti Kalisia were part of the celebration. It began with the Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Steeven SJ, of Madhya Pradesh Province. The mass was made vibrant with the traditional entrance dance and the traditional hymns. To mark this auspicious day there are rituals given by the ancestors called Karam Puja led by a Pahan who is an elder of the village. Sch. Anmol Robert SJ was the Pahan of that day. Three branches were cut and brought in the middle of the lawn and placed for the further rituals. The Karam branches were worshiped in the traditional way by the Pahan. He then narrated the Karam story with great fervor. The lunch was prepared for all the participants. After the lunch break there was traditional dance. The festivity ends with the immersion of the branches. All are supposed to dance around the Karam branches until the branches are immersed in either the river or the pond, but here we immersed the branches in a tub which was prepared in one corner of the lawn. All came dancing in a procession to bid farewell to the Karam Raja. The entire celebration was well organized and appreciated by all those who came to witness this traditional feast of the tribals of the Chhottanagpur.

Tihar Ashram: A Beacon of Inspiration

The Pastoral Reflection of Tihar Ashram was organized on 8 September. Fr. Cornelius, the Field Work Director welcomed the Chief Guest Ms. Bell Rose the Superintendent of Jail no: 6. Sch. Jesus screened the interviews on human life, dignity, prison, etc. Nature of the work with concrete figures and facts about Tihar Ashram Ministry were introduced by Sch. David. Mr. Ambrish, an ex-prisoner from jail no:7 shared his rich experiences in Tihar and how he turned the misfortune into a beacon of inspiration for the rest of his life by starting an NGO for the poor children in Haeyana at Ballabgarh. The audience was wonderstruck by the sentimental sharing of Mrs. Rama, a convict released for her good behavior. Mrs. Rama’s sharing touched our hearts. She said, “Jail is not a place of tortures or torments as shown in movies, rather it is a home for people to improve oneself.” Sch. Thomson and Sr. Emrika presented the theological reflection based on the experiences that they had in Tihar Ashram. Sr. Priyadarshini introduced the Chief Guest Ms. Bell Rose the Superintendent of Jail no: 6. She touched the hearts of all with her spontaneous faith-sharing. “I have to share with the world that I am blessed. Wherever you go God will be there. Everybody is good, there are times and situations, events and experiences that label us bad or convicts otherwise.” Fr. Michael T. Raj, SJ the Rector honoured the Chief Guest with a shawl and Fr. P.R. John, SJ the Principal presented a Memento to the Chief Guest as a token of our gratitude.

We all stood and sang the hymn ‘The World Stands in Need of Liberation my Lord!’ as the culmination of our reflections.

Gabriel Raja, SJ (B.Th. II)
We began the seminar with an ecumenical prayer which led us to an awareness of the Divine presence. Fr. P.R. John SJ, Principal of Vidyajyoti college of Theology, introduced the theme of the seminar in the light of 500 years of the Reformation in the Church and then introduced the Guest of honour Dr. Jetti Oliver. Dr. Jetti Oliver highlighted the numerous conflicts that plague the world due to policies and practice of exclusion and he stressed the need to work towards bringing about communion. Fr. Cornelius Ekka SJ introduced Dr. Gudrun Loewner and moderated the session. She presented a paper on the theme ‘The Reformation and Katharina von Bora’. She emphasized the role of Katharina von Bora in the life and the work of Martin Luther. She ended by posing new challenges to the Church of today in the pursuit of communion. The second presentation was by Fr. Leonard Fernando SJ, Rector of St. Joseph’s College, Trichy and former Principal of Vidyajyoti college of Theology. Fr. G. Christopher moderated this session. Fr. Leonard’s paper entitled ‘Catholic response to Luther over the years’ traced the development of the Church’s attitude towards Martin Luther over the years. He delineated how this response has gradually improved, moving from outright hostility to a more cordial tolerance. The challenge posed was to move from prejudice and discrimination to respect and unity in communion. The seminar concluded with the delightful theological dance performances of artists from Kaladarshini, Vijayawada trained by Mrs. Padmashri and animated by Frs. Ravishekar SJ and P.R. John SJ.

A One Day Seminar for the Youth on ‘Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment’ was organized by the Parish Ministry group of Vidyajyoti College of Theology on 11th Nov 2017, Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 10:45 a.m. Sch. Anderson, warmly welcomed the gathering officially. Sch. Amid, the Master of Ceremonies for the day, with his serious and lighter jokes caught the participants’ attention throughout the day. The session further continued with the lighting of the lamp by Fr. Victor Edwin, the Acting Principal and Registrar, Fr. Alosanai, a Spiritual Father, Br. Bibin C.S.T. a III B. Th. representative and three youth participants. Fr. Michael T. Raj, the Rector of Vidyajyoti gave the key note address highlighting the five hierarchical needs of human beings (Physical/Basic, Safety, Relationship/Social, Self-Respect, Self-Actualization). There was an ice-breaking session conducted by Sch. James Raja and Br. Prasanna to introduce the participants to one another. Sr. Divya, a III B. Th. student at Vidyajyoti, was the resource person for the first session on ‘Faith’. She discussed the importance of having faith in our life. The second session was taken on ‘Discernment’ by Sch. Sameer Minj, S.J. He gave very relevant examples from our day-to-day life to make the topic relevant. The food committee was ready with a delicious lunch. We assembled in the auditorium at 2.40 p.m. just after lunch for the third session which was conducted by Sch. Anderson on ‘Discernment.’ He said that God speaks to us through our feelings. This session touched the daily life of the youth.

Finally, we had a very short prayer service led by Br. Anil and group to thank
We, the members of street children and rickshaw pullers ministry organized a one-day programme for the street children. It was on 9 September at Vidyajyoti College. Along with 65 children 20 rickshaw pullers also participated. They came in the morning and their personal hygiene was met like: hair cutting, bathing, dressing of the wounds, providing them new clothes, etc. and they had their breakfast. They were brought to the hall and they were allowed to express themselves through play, dance, singing etc. They were happy and excited. A movie was shown to them. Fr. Cornelius SJ the Field work director addressed the students, following which was an interaction with the children in which they shared their views and desires. Most of them expressed that they are so excited to come to this place and they used to wait for this day to come. The children enjoyed the delicious food and there was a sense of gratitude and joy from the side of children as they moved out from the college. The purpose of this day was achieved by making them feel that they are loved, cared for and accepted.

Br. Melbin T. CST (B.Th. II)

Vidyajyoti College organized Balmela 2017 on 19 November at St. Xavier primary school ground in memory of late Fr. Cornelius Ekka. This day was chosen because Pope Francis announced it as World Day of the Poor. The theme for Balmela was “HAPPY CHILDHOOD.” There were around 400 children from different ministry places, nearby slums of Delhi participated. Under the guidance of Fr. Principal, Fr. Victor Edwin and the Balmela core team, planned out the programme meticulously and executed it. The event began at 9:00 a.m. The sister superior from Missionaries of Charity was the Chief Guest for the inaugural ceremony along with her Fr. Tom from St. Xavier’s community was also present there. In Fr. Tom’s inaugural address he asked the children to hope in the hopeless world.

Children participated in many games and won prizes. The goal is to see them happy was achieved. We had lunch at 12.30 pm and all the staff and students joined the children for lunch. Thanks to all the brothers and sisters who played a major role in the arrangement of food; it was very tasty. We gave a short lunch break and after that we had a cultural programme. Shri. Kartar Singh Kochher, the Chairperson of Minority Commission of Delhi accepted to be a Chief Guest. Along with him a Guest of Honour, Rev. Sr. Anasthasia Gill the member of Delhi Minority Commission was present. Winners of the drawing and singing competitions were distributed prizes by the Chief Guest. Cultural items were given by respective ministry groups and each group came up with a spectacular performance. We had a good time and the children really enjoyed all the games and the programme. We could do this only by the co-operation of all the staff, members of the core team, brothers and sisters from Vidyajyoti College. It was a wonderful day. A big thanks to all the benefactors who generously contributed financial help to make the children happy. I also express my heartfelt thanks to St. Xavier’s School Community for their constant support and guidance.

Sch. Arul Antony SJ (B.Th. I)
Every human person would have raised questions about God and His/Her existence, experience, relationship with human persons. Theological insights would widen the horizon of my understanding of God, Human Person, and the entire Cosmos. The *Pentateuch*, the first five books of the Holy Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) popularly known as ‘the five books of Moses.’ highlights on Gods dealings with humankind from the creation of the Cosmos until the death of Moses.

Genesis explains how God created the Cosmos and the vibrant living things in it, the desired plan within God's Heart to create Humankind in His own image and likeness. The concept of sin reveals how Adam and Eve broke their bonding with God. In Exodus God reveals Himself to the world by setting His people free from bondage in Egypt by calling Moses. God establishes an everlasting covenantal relationship with chosen race. Leviticus is God's textbook for teaching His chosen people about holy living and worship. Therefore, the prevailing theme of Leviticus is that holiness is an essential part of God's plan for all of us.

The book of Numbers records the chosen people's sour experiences on their way to the Promised Land through the wilderness. The chosen people remained stubborn, faithless and exhibited disobedient behaviors towards God. They lacked perseverance in their faith and trust in God. Perseverance in our daily prayers, spiritual activities, practicing love and forgiveness, kindness, showing mercy, living the gospel values would nourish us with sweet experiences on our journey with Jesus. Deuteronomy was written when the chosen people were about to enter the Promised Land. Deuteronomy gives a firm reminder that God is worthy of worship and obedience. When God dialogued with Moses, God revealed His Divine name *I AM WHO I AM* (Ex 3:14), assumes as that I will be with you. God remains ever faithful in His close relationship with the human person, God Loves every person so dear to His/Her heart. Therefore, insights of *Pentateuch* highlighted would enable us know, love and experience our close bonding with God.

### God in Jesus Christ

We the second year students were guided by our teachers to understand and interpret - “God in Jesus Christ”. St. Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ was a fellow pilgrim in our quest. He helped us to have *darshan* (religious seeing-touching-knowing) of God in Jesus Christ. The conversion experience that he underwent was a total and radical transformation in his life. He was convinced of what God has done to the humanity in and through Jesus Christ (Christocentric theology): “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Hence Paul articulated Christ event as salvation, redemption, justification, transformation, glorification, sanctification, new creation, freedom, peace and reconciliation. His missionary journeys were telling examples of his commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church. The course on Christology helped us to see that one cannot do Christology in Asia/India without setting it in the context of the variety of ways in which God is mediated to men and women. It necessarily followed that Christology is to be read with the heart which alone sees reality truly and tastes it. Finally, to be a Christian is to believe in, experience, and worship God in a Trinitarian way. But what should Christians believe about the Trinity? Why should they believe what they do about the Trinity? Is the Christian understanding of Triune God same as Hindu understanding of Saccidananda or Islamic understanding of Trinity? – “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear” – (Acts of the Apostles 2:32-33).
Based on the course on the Sacrament of Healing, Reconciliation – I would like to jot down my thoughts on the importance of reconciliation to God, to oneself and to others in today’s world. When I reflect on this topic I get an image of two persons connected by a thread. Relationships are just like that thread which connects one to the other. When a bitter experience happens, the thread breaks and in reconciliation, that thread is tied together again to get them reconnect. In this process, the knot remains because scars cannot be erased easily but that knot makes the people come close to each other a little more. We, as Christians follow Jesus who forgave those who crucified Him even from the cross.

Today we are living in a world where people are becoming more sensitive and touchy on matters that one would laugh off a decade ago. Intolerance on political, religious and personal grounds is becoming a fashion today. We hold on to things without letting go. When we are angry we don’t wish to talk it over. When we are hurt, we don’t forgive. We wish to see someone paying a price for what has happened. In this process, we fail to realize that by not forgiving we ourselves are paying the prize. Forgiveness has always been hard, but these days I think that it has become almost impossible to forgive, forget and let go. Forgiveness can be hard. It stems from strength and not from weakness. The first step to this healing experience is to acknowledge that you have hurt someone and you yourself are hurt. Secondly talk it over. Talk to people who can guide you and if possible, to the one who have hurt you. And finally pray for the light and strength to take the steps we need to take in living out this forgiveness. Forgiveness is possible and it is necessary for ourselves and the world.

Sr. Divya Joseph CJ (B.Th. III)

**Christmas Celebrations**

**In MC Houses:** The hospital ministry group, with the help of the staff guides Fr. Milianus and Fr. Mike T. Raj organized Christmas celebration in our respective places: Seemapuri, Majnukatilla and Jangpura. This celebration brought light and joy to the hundreds of people who are mentally sick, physically weak with various diseases and orphans. Colorful cultural programme were performed by the students of Vidyajyoti. Inmates too mesmerized us with their scintillating performances. Jesus was born in a manger yet drew the attention of the world. Similarly these people who are driven away from their families enjoy the comfort and care from MC sisters. Our presence and their co-operation enabled us to experience the birth of Jesus in our hearts.

**In Tihar Ashram:** A one-day Christmas programme for the inmates of Tihar Jail no. 6 and 7 was organized on the 5th of December, 2017. It was an effort from the Vidyajyoti College reaching out the message of Christ, the Prince of Peace. The cultural programme for the inmates lasted for about two hours. A short message, by the Chief guests Dr. Beena Antony Reji in jail no.6 and Fr. A. John Paul in jail no.7, enriched the hearts and minds of the inmates. Varieties of items such as Skits, Kawali, Carol Singing, Karahattam refreshed the hearts of the inmates. The Superintendents of Jail no 6 and 7 thanked Fr. P.R. John, the Principal and the students for organizing the event in the jail. They also wished the college a happy Christmas and a happy New Year.

**In the College:** The staff and the students of Vidyajyoti college of Theology celebrated Christmas on 20 December 2017. there was a talk by Fr. Dr. M.D. Thomas on The Universal Values of Bible (Moolya Bible Ke) followed by carol singing and cultural programme. We bid farewell to Fr. Francis the outgoing Registrar, and we extended a warm welcome to Fr. Antony Raj the new Registrar.
On the 21st of November, along with the Principal, 86 students from Vidyajyoti College participated in the Farmers’ agitation. They conversed with farmers who expressed their distress and pain. Eminent personalities like Medha Patkar, Yogendra Yadav and Annadurai expressed their sentiments on these issues and challenged the Union Government’s deafened ears to respond to the cries of the farmers. The Winter Session in the Parliament was postponed to December. However this didn’t hamper the spirit of the agitators. The AIKSS also decided to formulate certain proposals to tackle the farmer’s situation. The students of Vidyajyoti had an experience of a lifetime which in future would inspire and motivate them to fight for issues of National interest and mostly for the common masses.

Flames of Hope

On 24th November 2017 Hospital ministry group organized a common pastoral reflection for the whole college. The theme of the day was “Flames of Hope.” We had Sr. Monica, Missionaries of Charity from Seemapuri as the Chief Guest of the programme. The session began with a prayerful song led by Sch. Marainus and group. Bro. Jeeson was the first one to share his experiences with the patients of Seemapuri where leprosy patients were cared by Sisters of Missionaries of Charity. Sr. Gnana Vidya shared her experiences with the inmates of Jungpura. The sharing loaded with her difficulties to understand the language of children and to convey to them that God loves everyone. Sch. Sameer Kerketta also narrated the varieties of experiences that he had with the inmates of Majunu Ka Tilla. After that there was a video presentation prepared by Sch. Marain. Sr. Arockia Gracy and Bro Arockia Raj presented the theological reflection. Both of them were critical, analytical and theological. Sr. Monica, the chief guest of the day also triggered the group with her reflection. She was also grateful to the brothers and sisters who visit their homes. The whole session was enriched by the questions and clarifications.

Thanks To

Mr. Mazroor Ahmed and Mr. Dinesh Prasad
Our Librarians for their Service

Fr. Francis Ezhakunnel SJ
Our Registrar for his service

Welcome To

Fr. Antony R. Raj SJ
Our New Registrar

Our friends from Australia at Vidyajyoti
Dr. Tim Eakin & Dr. Sivakumar