

VJ TODAY

(Doing Theology with Open Eyes)



Professor Emeritus

Rev. Thomas Venad SJ

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Doctorate in Theology & DEPT

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

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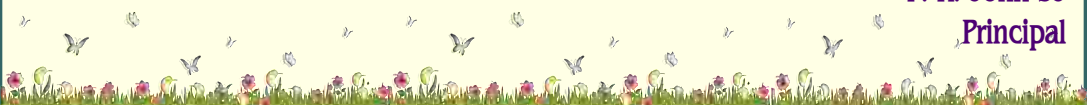
A Sense of Joy

Fr. Rector, staff colleagues and students

Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, Tungabhadra, Cauveri, Periyar and Bharatapuzha rivers continue to flow. Our life is no exception. Some of you are at the crossroads of your life – new beginnings and perhaps in uncharted waters. All the very best. As we come towards the end of the academic year 2017-18 what is uppermost in my mind and heart is gratitude and a sense of joy. Our success stories have made a remarkable impact this year. We have networked with others – different NGOs and activists, seminaries, and educational institutions, our RTCs and ecumenical groups. In and through them God has led us to experience his grace, be a blessing to others and recommit ourselves with greater vigor. Thanks so much for your cooperation – staff, students and co-workers.

“Doing theology with open eyes” has been accomplished by various activities like lectures and presentations, group discussions and common pastoral reflections at VJ, books and periodicals in the library, talks and seminars offered in VJ and other institutions in Delhi and elsewhere, interreligious meetings for peace and harmony and protest rallies against injustices have been resources for our theologizing activity. The wonderful people whom we have served in the slums, prisons, parishes and interacted during *Karwan-e-Mohabbat* have kept us down to earth, feet on the ground, and challenged us to be more human. I would like to thank in a special way the student council members – Arohit Kujur, Melwyn Fernandes, Franklin Rex Peter, David Paulraj, Mamata Lakra and Pheigathuaipou Gangmei – for shouldering effectively and carrying out their responsibilities with dedication and joy. I also thank many students who held various portfolios and served with utmost sincerity and commitment: Fieldwork, Class Project, Tatvaviveka, VJ Today, VJ College Chapel, Documentation Centre, Sound System, Website, Camera and Video, Computer, Philosophy course, Allahabad Seminar, Science and Religion Seminar, Pilgrimage to Rishikesh and Haridwar. I wish you all, students and staff, all the best and pray for God’s blessings for the coming days. A Happy holidays to all. I thank the editorial board, specially Dn. Joachim and welcome to new team headed by Sch. Jesus Vivian.

P. R. John SJ
Principal





Pongal: Feast Of Harvest

Pongal is a harvest festival, celebrated by the people of Tamil Nadu all over the world irrespective of their varied profession, caste and religion. Marking each one of us as children of one Mother (Tamilthai), it's a time of great blessings which was celebrated in Vidyajyoti College on 16th January as a sign of oneness, joy and unity. This festival is celebrated at harvest time to thank the Sun-God, the rain and all the animals of the farm. The Tamil month 'Thai' begins with the festival of Pongal, therefore it is also a time of great blessings. Fr. Raj Kumar SJ in his speech enlightened the gathering on the significance of the great festival of Pongal, and emphasized the need to protect and preserve the Mother Earth for the future generations. A spectacular folk dance that really entertained everyone was staged under the leadership of Bro. Velankanni and his company. Then came the long awaited, a peculiar game of the Tamils, "Urri Adithal." (Breaking of a pot). The "Sweet Pongal" was distributed to the participants. It was one of the sweetest experiences for everyone.



Sr. Mary Jarsi PBVM (B.Th. I)

Talk on Indian Constitution



In view of the 69th Republic Day, in collaboration with the Media House, Delhi, Fr. P.R. John, the Principal, organised a talk on India's Constitution: Roots, Values and Wrongs on 24th January 2018. The main speaker was Dr. M. P. Raju, Jurist and Lawyer, Supreme Court of India. He quickly captured the attention of the audience through his thoughts and reflection. Along with Dr. M. D. Raju, there were other guests too. Fr. Xavier Vadakkekara, OFM. Cap introduced the speaker and Fr. Poulouse SJ engaged the audience with his critical comments, which led to a healthy discussion. This talk was the need of the hour amidst various atrocities inflicted by the fundamentalists groups. The first year students of theology took active part in organizing this seminar for the whole college.



Sch. Franklin Rex SJ (B.Th. I)

International Symposium in Mumbai



An International Symposium on Science-Religion dialogue was organized in joint collaboration by St. Xavier's College Mumbai and Indian Institute of Science and Religion, Delhi under the directorship of Fr. Job Kozhamthadam. The topic of the conference was "Recent Developments in the Neurological Sciences and the New Interpretation of the Spiritual Aspect of the Human." It was held from 9th February to 11th February in St. Xavier's campus, Mumbai. During the inaugural session, the Festschrift of Dr. Kuruvilla Pandikattu, professor at JDV, Pune was released. There were over 100 participants from various institutes in India and a few speakers from abroad. Schs. Leo Arockiaraj and Thomson Lopes from VJ participated in the Conference. Fr. Job proposed a process of the genesis of the human soul using Teilhardian insights. Prof. Heidi Russell spoke of the soul as the infinite potential according to quantum physics. Dr. Sally John shared her experiences from the field of psychiatry between spirituality and neuro-biology. Fr. Thomas Karimundackal gave the Biblical perspective of human soul using the Hebrew concept of *nephesh* and Greek *psyche*. Dr. V.N. Magare, the Vice Chancellor of Mumbai University was the chief guest for the valedictory function.



Sch. Leo Arockiaraj SJ (B.Th. I)



The PAC Meeting

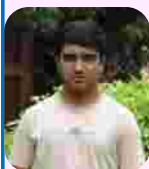


The PAC meeting was held in Vidyajyoti College of Theology, from 12 to 16 February, 2018. There were altogether twenty-five participants from RTCs (Ranchi, Varanasi and Madurai) & NTC (VJ). The meeting begun with celebration of the Holy Eucharistic, by Fr. Michael Thanaraj SJ the Rector of Vidyajyoti College. At the very beginning the two documents namely; 'Sapientia Christiana' & 'Veritatis Gaudium' along with VJ Statutes & By-Laws were presented by professors, Fr. P.R. John SJ (Principal), Fr. Valan SJ (Scripture Professor) and Fr. Alla Stanislaus SJ (Moral Theologian). It was followed by discussion on VJ Statutes and By-Laws.

"Workshop on Understanding Indian Constitution: Salient Features and Implications" was organized for the whole college on 14th February. Mr. Robin Ratnakar David and Mr. Pramod Singh were invited as resource persons and Mr. Pramod Singh, Fr. Maria Arul Raja, S.J. & Fr. Francis Minj, S.J. were panelists. We were divided into different groups for discussions. The fourth day of the meeting, i.e. 15th February was set aside especially for the election of the senate and for the report presentation, where the student representatives of NTC and RTCs presented a report of their respective places creatively. It was indeed an eye opening, encouraging, inspiring, and challenging experience. Finally PAC meeting ended on 16th February with an evaluation of the meeting and planning for the next PAC meeting followed by class project presentation by 2nd year B.Th. Students of Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi. The Meeting was concluded with a short video presentation based on Magnificat as a symbol of gratitude to God the Almighty for being favorable and guiding in every moment during the meeting.



Sch. Arohit Kujur, S.J. (B.Th. III)



Love Conquers

Love Conquers is the theme for Class Project of the Second year students of theology and was presented in the form of a drama on 16th February. The script was written and directed by Br. Arokia. The focus of the play was on current social issues like; beef-ban, inter-religious marriage, pluralism, Hidutwa, youth problems and religious fundamentalism. Issues were brought out through acts, songs, dances and debate. Social issues and the role of religion are two contemporary realities we grapple with every day. The struggles that involved in interreligious marriage were brilliantly brought out in the play. Songs focusing on the theme of the play were composed by Brs. Malcolm and Nicholas and portrayed the emotions of the struggles and pains that people go through in the inter-religious marriage. It was an occasion for all of us to work together as a team. It was an attempt to express our theological reflections through a different form rather than the classroom setup. Our staff guides were Frs. Milianus, Victor Edwin and Sr. Shalini whose constant support, suggestions and encouragement contributed to the success of the play.



Sch. Jinesh NS. SJ (B.Th. II)





Tribal Seminar for Domestic Co-workers

Tribal seminar for domestic co-workers-2018 was organized at Vidyajoti College on March 11, 2018, with the theme “Women’s Rights and Protection under the Indian Constitution.” There were around 250 tribal women from all the ministry centers. Holy Mass at 9:00 a.m. was presided over by Fr. Manoj Tirkey and Fr. Millianus Beck. Deacons, Roshan Baa and Arohit Kujur were present. The programme began with the lighting of lamp by Fr. P.R. John, Fr. Millianus, Br. Thomson, Sr. Teresa Paul who is a lawyer belonging to Holy Cross Congregation of Patna enlightened and inspired the Tribal women with rights of the Indian Constitution. She focused on the six fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution; and right to constitutional remedies. She also touched upon some new arrived criminal offences against women like; acid attack, women trafficking. The talk was appreciated by all. After that Fr. Nicolas of SVD talked about the different vocational training programme for women. Fr. Milianus thanked all the leaders of the different centers.



Sr. Binista Kerketta IBVM (B.Th. I)



International Women’s Day

The “International Women’s Day” was organized on March 12 2018 in Vidyajyothi College of Theology. Fr. P.R. John SJ, the Principal, introduced the speaker Ms. Tehmina Arora to the forum. All the women students and women staff both teaching and non-teaching staff were honoured by the management as a sign of our respect and support for their dedication to this institution. Sr. Shalini, moderated the session. Ms. Tehmina Arora spoke on “Women of Today,” highlighting the drastic reduction in the sex ratio across the nation. ‘Everyone is in the image and likeness of God, why should woman be considered as curse?’ Women are worshiped in our country but at the same time they are also wrapped and sold, raped and killed as commodities and goods. The increased domestic violence and no safety zone outside the house clearly depict the state of women in India. Students in turn resonated with the speaker with their empowering songs by Srs. Sanjukta, Jency & company.



Sr. Mamta, OSU (B.Th. II)



Thank You & Farewell

23rd March 2018, was one of the memorable days of the year, for Vidyajyoti College of Theology because of the events of the day; emeritus day for Prof. Fr. Thomas Venad, SJ, farewell to the 3rd years and certificate students and the release of *Tatvaviveka* (an annual magazine). The programme began at 11:15 a.m. with a prayer song (Magnificat), followed by felicitation to Prof. Fr. Thomas Venad. After that we had the release of the magazine (*Tatvaviveka*) and farewell to outgoing students and ended with the message from both Fr. Rector and Fr. Principal. During the programme, Fr. Thomas Venad and some students namely, Sr. Mini, Sr. Pratima and Sch. Savari were given opportunity to express their heartfelt sentiments. The programme was indeed lively, heart touching and meaningful. Cultural events brought colours to our eyes and there was sharing of memorable moments and gifts were presented to the outgoing students.



Sr. Neelima Xalxo DSA (B.Th. III)



Symposium: Inculturation and Dialogue

A day of Symposium was organized on 3rd March 2018 in Bishop Hartmann Missionary Academy, Allahabad, UP on the following theme, "Interreligious Dialogue and Inculturation: At the Service of Peace and Development." The program was moderated by Most. Rev. Dr. Raphy Manjaly, Bishop of Allahabad. The student's participants were from seven colleges and enriched the audience through their relevant presentation. Sr. Arul Mary and Sr. Emricka Dung Dung were privileged to represent VidyaJyoti and presented a Paper on Pope Francis, St. Mother Theresa, the apostle of the chottanagpur Venerable Fr. Livens and Bl. Rani Maria. Here I will like to note down a few highlighting thoughts of the symposium.



Inculturation and dialogue are the two means of evangelization in Indian context. The contemporary models for Inculturation and Dialogue are St. Mother Theresa and Pope Francis. Mother Teresa stands as a great model for mission that still lives on. The culture into which she incarnated the unconditional love was the culture of the hungry, the naked, the sick and the dying, the abandoned, the unloved and the unwanted, no matter to what religion or culture or nationality they belonged to. Pope Francis challenges to incarnate the Gospel by joyful proclamation, evangelization of one-self through a deep encounter with a people and evangelization of the culture. He is a model of Dialogue both in word and deed.

What we learn from them for our mission today: Inculturation and Dialogue are the need of our time, especially country like India, with pluralistic and multi-cultural background, growing fundamentalism, unstable political situation and human dignity and respect for life is declining. It is a challenge for all of us to be missionaries, and mediators of God's love by reaching out to the peripheries. A sincere thanks to the VidyaJyoti faculty in a special way to Fr. P.R. John the Principal for giving us this opportunity to participate in this dynamic event. Sincere thanks to Fr. Stan Alla, for his constant accompaniment to present the Paper. Heartfelt thanks to all the students for supporting us in a unique way.



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

Immersion Experience



Schs. Nelson Castelino (JAM), Sanjeev Tirkey (MAP), Melwyn Roshan Fernandes (KHM) and Liavi Nukhu (KHM) had the immersion experience from October 1 to December 31, 2017. We rented a house at Majnu-Ka-Tila through the help of MC Sisters of Nirmal Hriday. During the three month stay, we attended regular classes, attended daily Eucharist, cooked our own food, took daily Mathematics and spoken English classes to the under privileged students of the locality. Moreover, we also visited Catholic families and conducted prayer service in their houses. We were also invited for the important activities of the community like monthly recollection, community meetings and reconciliation service. We express our sincere gratitude to Fr. Rector who visited us and prepared breakfast for us. Thanks to Fr. Raj Kumar who mentored and visited us twice and guided us into theological reflections. We had the Eucharistic celebration in our room by Fr. Caesar. The occasional visit by some scholastics brought us joy. We had the rich experience of being companions in the Lord. With the minimum comforts, we were able to identify ourselves with the poor around us. This experience has helped us to be more available, understanding and caring for others. We would like to thank God for keeping us in good health which helped us to push ourselves more into the context of living among the poor.



Sch. Melwyn SJ (B.Th. II)



Experiences and Learnings



It was with a certain sense of excitement and anxiety, I was looking forward to starting my pastoral ministry during the third year of my theological studies. It would offer me the a platform to put into practice pastoral care in my ‘long’ Jesuit formation. Another opportunity is to get in touch with the lives of the faithful in their joys and struggles. There have been so many learnings that have happened over the course of this past academic year. I would like to highlight just three of them as they could serve as an inspiration to the younger generation of ministers who would serve the faithful through various capacities. We receive more than we give — Unassuming greetings, honest feedbacks, unconditional love and total acceptance are some of the many things that we receive freely. The faithful respect the clergy and genuinely want them to be better people – Even though there may be certain flaws or behaviours in clerics that do not appeal to everyone’s eye. They have a tremendous sense of respect for God’s representatives. The faithful expect the young clerics to step up – Expectations to read the signs of the times and appeal to the younger generation of believers are at an all-time high. The need to interpret and expound the Scriptures and Church teachings in the light of the contemporary scenario is one of the pressing needs. It enriches our study of theology too as it forces us to study and theologize better. May the Lord bless our theological formation and that we, in the words of Pope Francis let these experiences make us “pastors in the image of Jesus, the good pastor”.



Sch. Anderson SJ (B.Th. III)



Experience of Sat-Cit-Ananda



We the first year students of Theology got an opportunity to visit the holy lands of Hindus; Hardwar and Rishikesh. It was really a wow experience to all of us. The ultimate aim of faithful through this religion is to attain *moksha* by the path of Niskamakarma. I never heard anything scornful about other religions. For the people of goodwill, all are children of one God, and all will finally reach the same destination in God. People are like pilgrims who are in this passing world are in search of the ultimate reality ‘Sat-Cit-Ananda’. They have no hesitation in accepting the good and learning from Holy Scriptures of other religions. As a student of theology I could feel the closeness and oneness with them. It was a time of transition for each and every one of us from the common conception of Hindus as fanatics, all the same, would reach to the realization of one truth that found in many religion. Thanks to our Principal and the staff for making this a real experience.



Bro. Ajay Mathew CST (B.Th. I)



Church: the People of God

In *Lumen Gentium*, the Church is described not as an organized society but as the “People of God”. There is thus an equality of dignity of all the baptized whether clergy or laity (LG 32). The scourge of clericalism which is one of the reasons people are turning away from the Church. Pope Francis has rightly been condemning clericalism in the Church. In the context of India, emphasizing the model of the Church as ‘the People of God’ would ensure greater participation from the laity and make the Church a vibrant community. The openness towards other faiths is for a purpose of ‘dialoguing Church.’ It called for dialogue not only with other Christians but also with people of other faiths. All these people are related to the People of God. (LG 15, 16). Doing theology in Vidyatyoti has given me this perspectives of acceptance and peaceful co-existence with the people of other faiths. As we do theology with open eyes which enhances me to be aware of the realities and the atrocities that has been provided a platform for us to do theology in the street with the poor and the downtrodden.

Sch. Thomson Lopes SJ (B.Th. II)





Christian Life & Mission in the World



Third year Theology has been a significant milestone in our lives. Our focus for this year was on the 'Christian Life and Mission in the World.' We are called to encounter and serve in our context by the pastoral practice of the diaconate and priesthood. Our Mission led us to awareness of specific concerns and challenges of the local Churches, which were best encountered in more particular contexts and pastoral activities. We have brought to the awareness of personal and social sin in the world, in the midst of which we are called to cultivate human and Christian virtues. Reconciling the Love of God experienced in faith made us an instrument of reconciliation to be reconciled and to reconcile. By knowing and realizing the need of reconciliation with oneself, with others, with God and finally entered the deeper understanding human person, sexuality, family towards the establishment of of attaining the wholeness of life know more about the human challenges involved in the area of bio-medicine. The eschatological hope found in various religions and placing our trust in Christ on his Resurrection. As we are at the verge of our stay, with grateful hearts we look back and thank God and all the staff and friends for the support and guidance in this journey of doing theology.



with the cosmos. We of meaning and dignity of and community and to work God's Reign. In the pursuit as Christians, we come to value system and ethical



Interview with ADF

Sch. Savari SJ (B.Th. III)

How do you perceive the holistic formation of the students in the Vidyajyoti College of Theology?

Vidyajyoti College of Theology is definitely known for its consistent contextual theological formation in India. Over the years VJ in collaboration with its Regional Theological Centres has evolved through various experiences, exposures and experiments its methodology of contextual theologizing. The multi-faceted context today with all its opportunities and challenges has not merely entered into its theologizing but also has provided content to theologizing. Socio-pastoral ministries cum periodical reflections on them, participation in people-oriented issues, demonstrations and *dharmas* have become integral to contextual theologizing. Exposure and interaction with the interreligious and intercultural groups, participating in the lectures and seminars of the intelligentsia on various relevant issues, participative methods in teaching and learning do indeed contribute to its theologizing process.

How do you visualize VJ for the next 10 years?

The dream quote of Dr. Abdul Kalam is quite inspiring, "Dreams are not what you see in your sleep. They are the things that do not let you sleep". Dreams keep us active, vibrant and dynamic in our lives. I wish to share here some of the dreams in which VJ can be engaged in the future. VJ can explore more creative ways of helping its students to become men and women of intellectual depth. More women and lay students can be engaged in this theological formation in order to contribute to the Kingdom ministry of Jesus at various levels. As electronic technology is growing rapidly, we can fruitfully and effectively use them in our teaching and learning. In a world of connectivity today we can be also connected to some important Eastern and Western centres of theological research and formation. More women and lay teaching staff will also make a significant difference in this theologizing enterprise. Online learning and research is another possibility.

I wish all the best to the present VJ Staff, Students and Collaborators and the future ones in this ongoing journey of theological formation. May all our dreams for VJ keep us active and vibrant in this journey.

Raj Irudaya, SJ

Assistancy Delegate for Formation (ADF)



A Dream behind the Prison Walls



(I am Sr. Priyadarshini Digal BS, writing the story of Aryan Sangma. I met this boy (through the intervention of Shimray Asaiwo Bell Rose, the Superintendent) on my regular compassionate visits to Tihar. Few months ago with the generosity of Fr. Rajesh Lobo SJ admitted him in the Sacred Heart School, Kuzhama, Nagaland. Jesus, the traveller accompanied us, in spite of delays in travel and the train hitting five elephants on the way to Guwahati.)

Dear Readers, I am Aryan born in Meghalaya. I am a little boy of seven years old. I want to narrate the miraculous journey of my dream. As a small boy I have experienced two faces of life. Life at home with my loving parents, relatives, friends and the other life in Central jail Tihar. I was in prison with my mother. Everyone has some ambition or the other. As a child I get fascinated by several things every now and then aspire to achieve them as I grow. Everyone wants to be successful and rich in a world today. I also dream of becoming successful in the field I choose although I am still indecisive about the career path I will choose. Just like others, I have also nurtured a career dream from an early age. Being behind the prison bars of Tihar I dared to dream. I aspire to become a pilot one day.

Wright brothers invented the Aeroplane and since then everyone has dreamed of flying; to fly high like the bird and reach the horizon. I first saw an Aeroplane flying when I was a small boy in Meghalaya and then immediately I asked my mother everything about it. My mother pointed at the aeroplane flying in the sky and said, "Aryan if you dare to dream you also can touch the sky one day". I grew fascinated with it and took courage to dream. But unfortunately I was destined for something else... Staying within the four walls of Tihar I could not see the world outside but all that I could see was birds flying in the sky, stars twinkling and the sun rising. I want to become a pilot because it makes me feel adventurous.



I have never been very good when it came to verbal communication of my feelings. I am also a bit of an introvert and do not like opening up with everyone. I had no friends in the prison and as you all know that life in Tihar is entirely different. But now I belonged to a bigger family of Vidyajyoti (in prison ministry Srs. Mamata, Emrika and Neelima) and I can never say that I am alone anymore because I have you all. After the classes in Tihar whenever I was alone I simply gazed at the sky looking for flying birds. The prison atmosphere made me wrap up myself in disappointment to that limitless sky. Till one day I met someone different in the prison and it was Fr. P.R John but for me lovingly known Fr. John. He cared for me bringing life, joy and vigour. When I was drifting in my dream of becoming a pilot Fr. John rekindled the flame of hope in me and enabled me once again to open up my wings and take a flight to that limitless sky and reach my goal. I vividly remember the day I was released from Tihar. We both were sitting in a room (as Sr. Priya was running around the office to complete the formalities), very compassionately listening to my queries, questions and the recitation of rhymes. He made me feel that each and every one has the capacity to achieve and this optimistic perspective made me believe in myself and my dreams.

As a little boy, I also dreamt of becoming a pilot. There is no harm in dreaming big however one must choose the path wisely keeping in mind ones potential and other aspects. Now as I am studying in Nagaland I have not forgotten about my dreams. I am doing well in my studies and learning more for life. All those who read my story do remember me in your prayers. Thank you.



Sr. Priyadarshini BS (B.Th. III)