

Troubadour

Volume 62, No 4

Spring 2019





In the 12th century Christ spoke to St Francis of Assisi from this cross:

“Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is falling down.”

Don't complain about the Church in the 21st century.

Hear Our Lord's call and do something about it!

The Friars Minor have followed St Francis' example for the last 800 years.

Why not be one of them?

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Troubadour

A MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

at the service of

- The Franciscan Missionaries working throughout the world but especially in disaster areas.
- The Franciscan Missionary Union.



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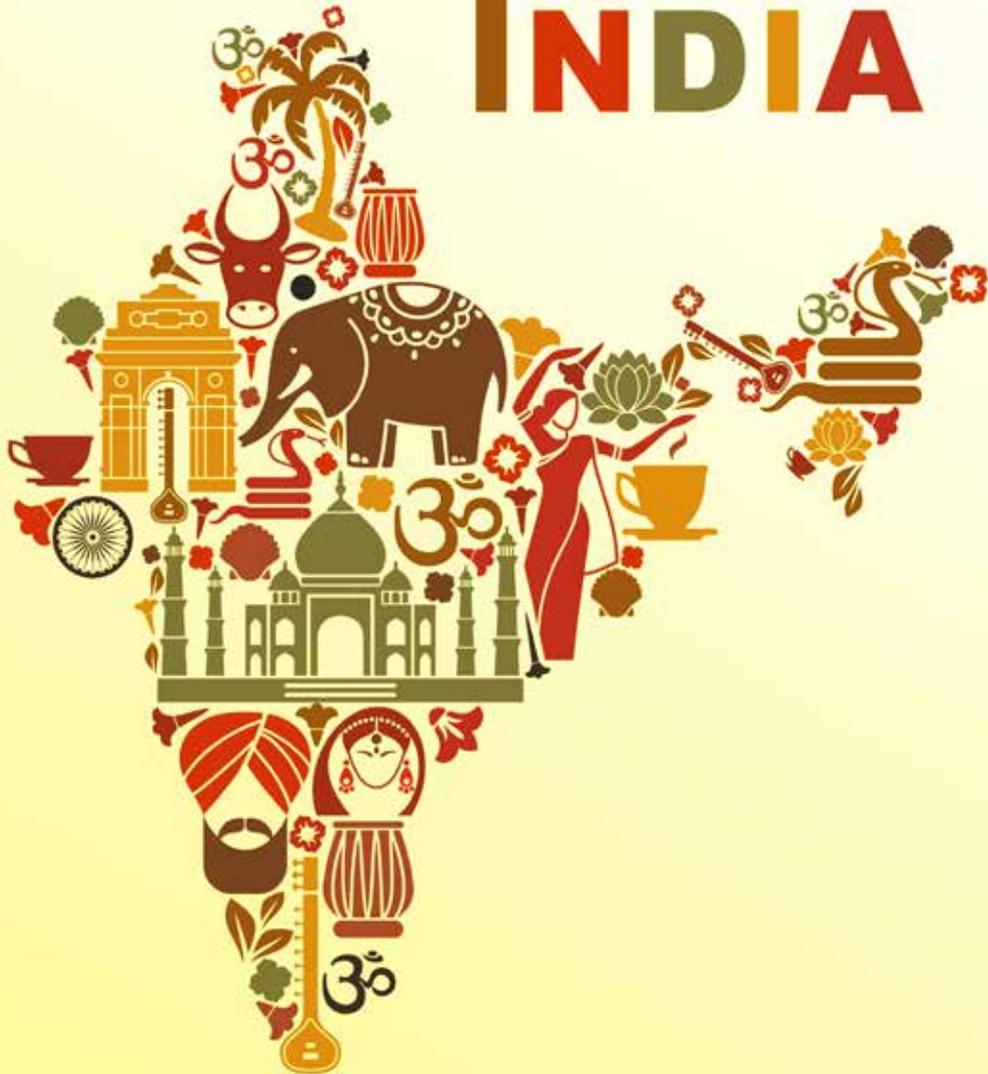
Front cover: Proud young Indian mother with her child.

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THE END OF AN ERA OF MISSION TO INDIA



In 1925 the Franciscans of the ancient "Provincia Angliae" arrived in India. For three years they worked in Hyderabad, Deccan.

In 1928 a new ecclesiastical unit with headquarters at Bellary was formed, consisting of undeveloped portions of the Archdiocese of Madras and the diocese of Hyderabad entrusted to them. The Catholics in this area numbered only a few thousands. It was therefore just a territory where priests and missionaries were needed, where there was scope for real zeal and a spirit of sacrifice. However, there was one great drawback. The few Catholics who inhabited these regions, were not of those classes, whence vocations to the priesthood and religious life are ordinarily drawn. Therefore almost from the beginning, the Franciscans of Bellary were obliged to look outside the limits of their territory for Indian vocations.

Very early they let their eyes fall on Bombay. Bombay possessed a large and excellent body of Catholics and vocations were numerous. Moreover Bombay was the port the Friars disembarked and where they had to transact a certain amount of business. At the same time there was a great deal of work available in the line of Triduums, Novenas, Missions, Retreats and special sermons. It was now a question of awaiting an opportunity to make the request.

This opportunity came in 1943. The war was on and the number of English speaking people, chiefly army and navy personnel, had increased to such an extent that there was real need for another English priest. Dr. T. Roberts S.J., Archbishop of Bombay, was therefore willing to have one of the English friars in Bombay. Fr. Fidelis McGee was appointed and since he was a Tamil scholar as well, he would also be able to look after the Madressee Community. Thus it came about that Fr. Fidelis was attached to the Holy Name Pro-Cathedral.

But the purpose of his coming was ultimately to establish a Franciscan Friary. In the course of 1943-1944, Archbishop Roberts offered the Friars the choice of three places : Byculla, Chembur, Sion. It was decided to accept Byculla with a view of setting up a new Parish there. In February, 1945, Fr. Fidelis took up residence in the compound of St. Anthony's Home, Bellasis Road. He would act as Chaplain to the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, who maintain an orphanage and a school. At the same time he would look after a portion of St. Anne's Parish. The Mother General F.M.M was so kind as to permit the Convent Chapel to be used on Sundays and holidays and for all parochial functions. We must add that the Sisters agreed to board and lodge the Friars free of charge.



A photo of St Mary's church from the 1920s, on Alexander Road now known as Sarojini Devi road, in Secunderabad — Photo from the archives of writer Ronald James Deshmukh.

Since Fr. Fidelis, after having served in India for twelve years, was due to go on leave. Fr. Egbert Barnes was appointed to Byculla in August 1945. Besides looking after the Parish, one or two neighboring Hospitals and the Chaplaincy, invitations from the local clergy were received to preach special sermons. Triduums, even Novenas. No wonder that his health broke down and that in 1948, he was replaced by Fr. Damian Brady.

For some time it had become evident that it would not be possible to find a Parish and residence in Byculla. Not only was it difficult to find a suitable plot, but above all the price was prohibitive. A proposal was then made that the Friars should take over St. Ignatius', Jacob Circle. Again difficulties, financial

and otherwise, came in the way, so that this idea too had to be dropped.

In the meantime Archbishop, now Cardinal, Gracias, had taken over the Government of the Archdiocese of Bombay. It was His Grace who kindly allowed the Friars to review their original choice and apply for Sion. Sion up to then had only been a chapel at ease, dependent on St. Michael's Mahim. His Grace separated it from Mahim, constituted it into an independent Parish and entrusted it to the Franciscans.

In June 1949 Fr. Damian Brady was transferred from Byculla to Sion and was soon joined by Fr. Bonaventure Davis. Some time later, two more Fathers were added : Fr. Anthony Rickards and Fr. Gratian McEvoy. In 1951 Fr. Damian left India to take up

the Directorship of the Franciscan Missionary Union at London.

The Residence of Sion constituted of two rooms, which had to serve as quarters for the Fathers, refectory, library, Parish and school Office.

The school too was badly housed. Part of it functioned in the Church, part in a dilapidated shed. It was therefore necessary that the Friars build. A loan was obtained, the Residence extended and part of the new school premises erected.

When the Bishop of Bellary, Dr. John Forest Hogan O.F.M., came to Bombay for the grandiose reception of India's first Cardinal, H.E Valerian Gracias, it was decided that since the residence had been completed, another Father could be appointed to Sion. Fr. Egbert, who had worked at Byculla a number of years, was named the new Superior and took possession both as Guardian and Parish-Priest on the 11th, of March 1953. Thus the present community (1957) consists of Frs. Egbert, Bonaventure, Anthony and Gratian.



Bishop John Forest Hogan, O.F.M., the first Bishop of Bellary displayed an unflinching spirit of sacrifice and dedicated his life to spreading the Gospel in the Diocese.

The Parish of O.L. of Good Counsel, Sion, consists of about a thousand Parishioners. One Priest, who receives periodical help from one of the other Fathers, is sufficient to perform all the duties necessary for the well-functioning of the Parish. The other Friars are occupied with special work, such as preaching of Missions, Retreats, Triduums, special sermons, conferences for Sisters. To illustrate this latter apostolate of the Bombay Franciscans, a rough summary of the work done in the 16 month period during 1955-1956 shows that the Friars preached 41 retreats, 72 special sermons, 8 missions, 11 novenas and triduums, 6 days of recollection, besides a regular series of monthly conferences to various congregations of nuns in Bombay.



Poor Indian Families living in Chawls, Bombay (Mumbai) in the 1940s.



The statue of St. Anthony of Padua during it's annual feast in Our Lady Of Good Council church and St. Anthony church, Sion, Mumbai.

Image courtesy of Tiven Gonsalves.

As far as the school is concerned, it had grown to such an extent that it was necessary to extend it still further. Another storey was added this year (1957) and within a few years it will have developed into a full-fledged High School.

The Franciscans returned to Bombay. Their forebears, the founders of the Church of Bombay island, worked for the salvation and sanctification of many. The present generation no less are working for the same purpose. That God is blessing their efforts and labours is apparent from the fact that by their example and preaching they have attracted a dozen young men to the Order, thus showing that the hopes they entertained, when settling in Bombay, have been realized.



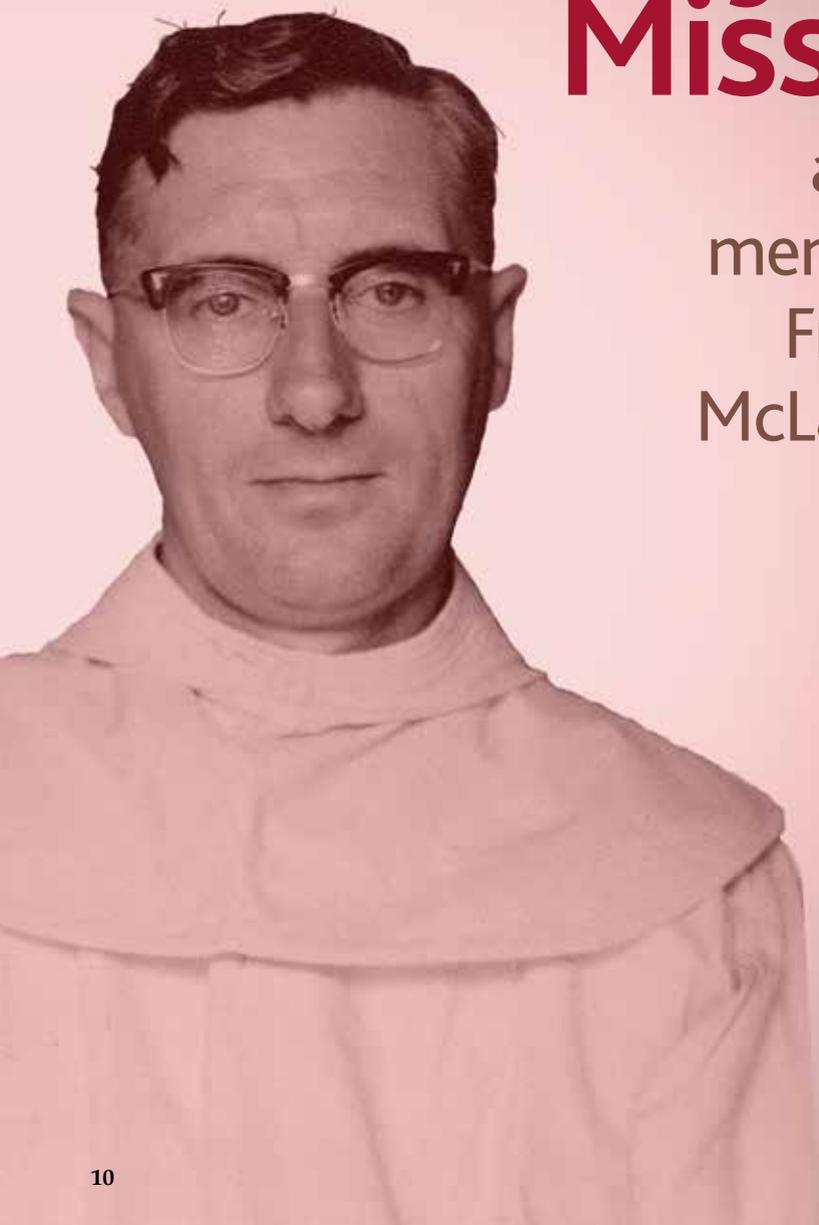
Worshippers gather at Mumbai's Holy Name Cathedral to celebrate the Ash Wednesday liturgy.

Over the decades thousands of children have benefitted from the love, care and teaching provided by the Missionary Brothers and Sisters in India.



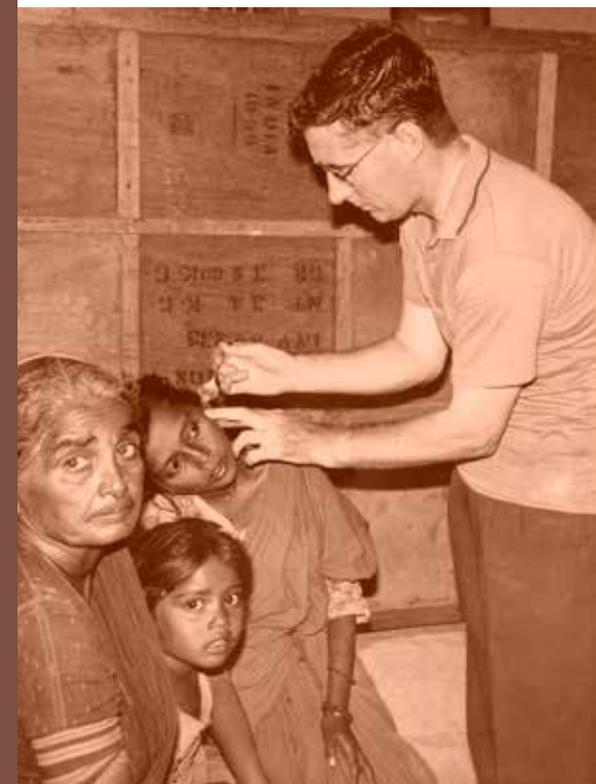
The Bellary Mission

and the
memory of
Fr Owen
McLaughlin
ofm



The Diocese and all missions of Bellary Diocese are very much indebted to foreign Missionaries, especially the Franciscan Missionaries of the Dutch and British Provinces for their missionary work and dedicated service. We gratefully remember all the departed missionaries who worked in Bellary Diocese and have gone to their eternal reward. One such great missionary was Fr Owen McLaughlin ofm whose 100th birthday we celebrated in 2018. He was the Regular Superior of Franciscans in Bellary, Parish Priest of Kowtal Mission and many other missions in the Diocese of Bellary. He was a great example to the young Indian priests and brothers. His missionary zeal and committed life was an inspiration to all in the Diocese.

In the year 1974 a very sad event happened. It was the first Sunday of Easter. Fr Owen went to Chikka Hesarur, one of the sub stations of the Kowtal Mission to offer Mass. While returning, it was already dark and raining; the motor bike light



A young Fr Owen doing what he loved best, providing aid, both physical and spiritual, to poor and needful families.

was very dim. There was a bullock cart on the main road, which he did



Fr Owen was a much loved and familiar figure in the area, and covered large areas of the Parish on his trusty motorbike.

Below is the photo of Fr. Owen McLaughlin ofm, born 08.10.1918. It is in memory of what would have been his 100th birthday. It is preserved in St. Antony's Church, Chikkahesarur.



not see. Unfortunately, he crashed into the bullock cart and died in the hospital the same night. He was buried in the Risen Christ Church, Kowtal. He had built the Church in 1973. Thousands of people gathered for the funeral Mass, all the people – Catholics and non Christians alike – were weeping and crying. He was a real spiritual father to all of them especially to the poor and downtrodden.

In memory of Fr Owen ofm and remembering what would have been his 100th birthday it is proposed to build 3 classrooms dedicated to his memory. His memory is still very fresh in the minds and hearts of all Catholics and non-Christians. He was instrumental in helping numbers of people to receive an education and to be freed from the clutches of land lords, caste systems and social evils. He stood for justice and truth. Please help us in our efforts to bring this memorial about.

(St Antony's Church, Chikkahesarur, Bellary India.)

This request has already been answered and a large donation has been sent and received by the Bellary Diocese. Thank you for enabling us to answer this request for help by your donations to the FMU. Other details of the Mission to Bellary are included in this issue.



Above: The new school building of St Antony's School. There are three classrooms on the ground floor and the proposed building will be on the first floor.



Left: The children gather for School Assembly.

Below: Bishop Henry D'Souza Bishop of Bellary, surrounded by families from the local Parish..





A third letter to those wishing to learn Spiritual Reading

by Robert Stewart ofm

Dear Friend,

The first two letters, issued in previous Troubadour magazines, dealt with the art of spiritual reading, and may God bless you if you have persevered so far. Now the art of spiritual reading may only be acquired by those who are prepared to the discipline required to acquire that art.

Discipline here does not mean rules and regulations but developing an attitude of a disciple, namely, doing things that dispose yourself towards being attentive to a spiritual master. Discipline is necessary

because ordinarily it is not possible to sustain the movement towards "life with God" without support and direction from others who are more experienced. The Word of God, contained in the sacred scripture offers you a most reliable guide, for he is the Way.

However, if initiation into a life with God is to go beyond mere sporadic enthusiasm, it demands a daily or weekly pattern of life which supports this kind of experience. Time must be taken to establish a new rhythm of life which will foster a reflective approach and an extended pondering of the scriptures. In the initial stages of the spiritual journey, it is necessary to introduce certain facilitating conditions for deepening your life with God.

Firstly, there is demanded a periodic withdrawal from the hectic pace of life. This withdrawal, to place alone, is necessary because without it we can fail to realize how much we have surrendered the direction of our life to other people. Everyone expects a feverish pace of work and involvement from you. Your liveliness and attractiveness are judged often by your activities. But without solitude and a relaxed presence to the Master, we fail to

provide the graced conditions for spiritual reading. You fail to ever be alone with the Word who is life.

A second facilitating condition is silence, because without silence how can you hear the word that emerges out of silence? You must learn to enter into silence, there to encounter the Word who is beyond silence. To procure inner silence you must learn to centre yourself, to still your speeding mind, so full of so many things. A useful exercise is to stay with a simple word like "Jesus", or a phrase like, "Christ have mercy", repeating it time and again until we centre upon that word. Another exercise is to close your eyes and sit as erect as possible. Begin to be aware of your breathing. Tune into the sensation of your whole body breathing. Let your breathing relax you. Listen to Him calling you by name, asking you the questions he asked of his disciples:-

"Whom do you say I am?" "Do you love me?" "What do you want, for what are you searching?" "What do you want me to do for you?" "Do you believe me?"

Wait, be patient with God and with yourself. Say with the disciples: "Lord it is good for us to be here." Remember that if you refuse to

be with yourself alone you are rejecting Christ's call to you. Learn to waste time with God. Don't feel guilty if nothing happens. Only if we are free to "waste" time on ourselves are we truly free.

There will most certainly be times when you will find no messages, no satisfaction from spiritual reading. This is the time when you have to put aside productivity as a criteria and allow the slow process of growth to take place. Seeds often lie dormant for many years before the conditions are right for its bursting into life. Coal lies black and uninviting in the cellar before it provides fuel for the fire. Learn to keep that fire alive by feeding the coals you have laid aside by persevering spiritual reading.

There are some crucial questions to ponder in this section.

Are you prepared to become a disciple, to submit, give control of what happens to you to another?

Are you able to be present to yourself, fully conscious and fully aware?

Are you prepared to take time to discover yourself, to receive the gift of yourself?

Do you feel guilty when you take time for yourself?

Are you able to relax and wait, in patient expectant love before God?

Are you prepared to lay aside your desire for productivity and surrender to the pace and grace of the Spirit?

God bless you and grant you the grace of becoming disciples.



1. **"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do".**
Jesus asks forgiveness for those who out of ignorance are crucifying him
2. **"Amen I say to you, this day you will be with me in paradise".**
His response to the good thief
3. **"Woman, behold your son". To the disciple, "Behold your Mother".**
As our Lord hung on the cross he united his Mother with all Christians
4. **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?".**
Words taken from Psalm 21 A psalm which speaks of his sufferings but last half is about hope. It ends with an acknowledgement that whatever happens we are assured victory over enemies
5. **"I thirst".**
Echoing Isaiah "Come all you who thirst" Jesus thirsts for his Father. God continues to thirst for those who have turned away from him or have never known him.
6. **"It is consummated".**
The expression used by our Lord is found in three places in scripture. In Genesis after creation, in Revelation at the end of time and here on the cross. This is the end of the "hour" of Jesus spoken at the Marriage of Cana.
7. **"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit".**
Jesus uses his freedom and chose to die at this moment. Let it be our choice to surrender ourselves to God.

I love thee Jesus my love above all things....

A Prayer to Jesus Our Saviour

Lord, hold my hand, I so need your loving kindness;
Lord hold my hand, all through life, in joy or grief.
Lord hold my hand, when I'm sick with fear and anxious;
Lord hold my hand, in the wonder of relief.
Lord hold my hand, when it's dark and storms are raging;
Lord hold my hand and help me live it through.
Lord hold my hand when I'm lifted, joyful, loving;
Lord hold my hand when I'm trying something new.
Lord hold my hand when I fail or faint or waver;
Lord hold my hand for I know your love is true
Lord hold my hand when I'm lonely, weary, ageing;
Lord hold my hand when there's only me — and You.

Amen



Heaven's membership list

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all
Nor the lights or its décor

But it was the folks in heaven
Who made me splutter and gasp-
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbour
Who never said anything nice.

Bob, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, "What's the deal?
I would love to hear your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must have made a mistake.

And why is everyone so quiet
So sombre – give me a clue."
"Hush child" He said, "they're all in shock,
No one thought they'd be seeing you...."

St Antonine Home for the Aged

You may remember from our previous issues how the Sisters, staff and residents of our Old Age Home in South Africa were trying to become more self-sufficient. Various projects such as raising chickens and vegetable gardens are continuing and now we also have a cow for milk. These are some pictures of their latest arrival with a note from Sr Lucia:

"Please find attached Photos for our milk cow. It has got a beautiful baby boy."

We thank you for your love and support

Regards, Sr Lucia.



THE DENIAL:

I've followed him for three years now,
one of two first called,
I've walked with him and talked with him and in
answers never stalled.
To think I could deny him thrice, to think he
thought I would,
Madness I convince myself, I must have
misunderstood.

The soldiers come out as he prays,
Judas leads the throng,
He asks why they come out with swords, for he
had done no wrong.
This I can bear no longer and I take out my sword,
I sever the ear of the servant of the high priest
who sent the horde.

He reaches down and takes the ear, and heals the
man anew,
I look around and realize those with us are
now few.
The crowd moves in and takes him, and I flee
the scene,
I turn to watch and follow them, I must say
that I had seen.

They take him to be judged of Annas the
high priest,
They strike and mock and scorn him,
like some wild beast.

A woman stops me at the door and asks if
I know him,
I shake my head and walk on past, my hope
now growing dim.

They take him now to Caiaphas, the other of
the priests,
I take a seat by the fire, many here due to
the feasts.

A woman comes to me and says surely you
were with him,
I deny and shake my head, his chances
looking slim.

They laugh and beat and mock him,
since two witnesses they found,
'Tis blasphemy; they beat him, and gather
'round like hounds.

A man comes to me and says, this man was
with him too!

I deny and yell at him some curses, we old sailors
know a few.

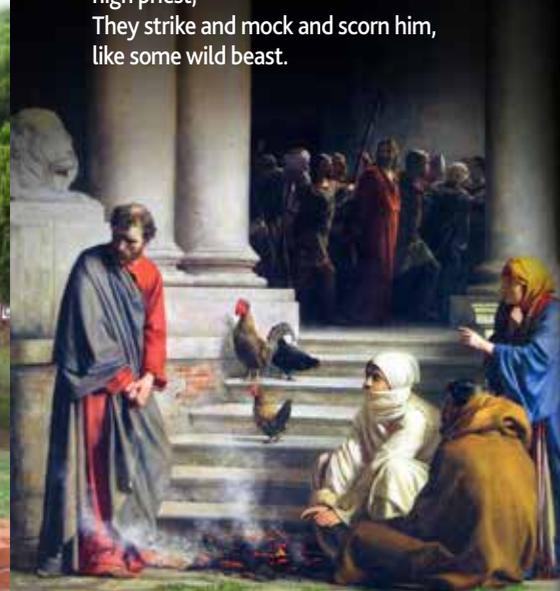
Just then I turn and hear the rooster,
crowing in the night.

I look back to the scene, the most one sided fight.
He looks at me through all the crowds,
the beatings and the pain,
His words, they echo in my mind, my grief burns
in my veins.

His eyes... they look through me, they pierce my
very heart,
Just a moment our gazes lock, and to water my
eyes start.

I cannot bear to see the holy sorrow in his face,
And so I turn and break away and run far from
that place.

I run away and don't look back, as midnight
shadows creep,
I fall down onto the earth and just begin to weep.
He knew it, and he told me so, and I denied
him thrice,
And he stayed there where I left him so that he
might pay my price.





Weapons of mass distraction!

by Nick Bramhill,
Catholic News Service

Alcohol, smoking and chocolates are some of the most well-known vices that people traditionally give up during Lent. But now Mass goers in Ireland are being urged to make what might be an even harder sacrifice throughout the penitential six-week period – switching off their mobile phones.

Parishioners in Navan, County Meath, are being urged to “reconnect with their families” in the weeks leading up to Easter by talking to one another rather than texting and browsing online. The “Invitation for Lent 2019” urges churchgoers to “reduce screen time in order to increase family time.”

Father Robert McCabe of St. Mary’s Church, Navan, said he hopes

parishioners will make a permanent lifestyle change, rather than just putting down their devices during Lent.

“Everybody can benefit from spending less time on their phones and laptops and using that time to communicate instead with their families,” he said.

“Even members of the clergy are guilty of being on their phones too much, and Pope Francis himself has highlighted this point when he chastised priests and bishops who take pictures with their mobiles during Masses, saying they should lift up their hearts rather than their mobiles.”

Father McCabe, a former military chaplain, said mobile phone etiquette has even been introduced in the pre-baptism courses he runs in his parish.

“One of the things we stress in the course is that just one person should be taking photos of the baptism, while everyone else relaxes and enjoys the occasion,” he said. “If people are holding up their phones to take photos of the event, then they are not properly engaging with it.

“The same can be said of weddings. The last thing a bride wants to see as she walks down the aisle is loads of people with taking photos with their phones. The only person that should be taking pictures is the wedding photographer.”

While Father McCabe acknowledges that some people – including those on call for their work – are not in a position to turn off their smartphones, he insists everyone could all benefit from spending less time staring into devices.

“A good description of phones that I’ve heard is that they are ‘weapons of mass distraction.’ If you’re in a position to switch them off, then do so and use that time positively,” he said.

“I hope people will heed this message during Lent, and that people will make changes for life, and not just for this period. People are spending too much time in the virtual world, and need to come back to the real world.”

Reconciliation and Resolution



The best way to observe Lent is by being officially reconciled to God in the great Sacrament of Reconciliation. Though the actual confession of our sins is private, our reconciliation by the Church in the penitential rite is a public event. Sincere sorrow actually wins God’s forgiveness before we ever approach the priest for absolution. But in Christ’s stead the priest receives our confession of fault and our purpose to mend our lives as the Church’s official minister.

School children learn about the sacrament, but if it’s been a while since you made your first confession, what follows is a quick refresher, courtesy of Mgr Richard Hilgartner. In his essay “The sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation: Forgiveness in four easy steps.” Msgr Hilgartner writes first about confession – “which entails admitting and naming one’s sins.”

This step is done with the priest who can encourage the penitent to fully confess his or her sins.

The second step is contrition – “one’s expression of sorrow for sin.” This step usually involves reciting the Act of Contrition, which asks God to forgive our sins and transgressions. Third is satisfaction for sin in which – “the sinner

demonstrates by action the intention to heal the harm done by sin.” This is the penance part of the sacrament in which the sinner repents and through action, or prayer, makes amends for the sin.

Lastly the priest offers Absolution from sin. During this the priest is acting “in the person of Christ.” Msgr Hilgartner points out that the power to offer absolution “has its roots in Jesus’ giving authority to forgive to his Apostles.” Our intent not to sin again is strengthened by the power of the Sacrament and the firmer the intention, the greater the healing grace we receive from God. Pope Francis in last year’s penitential service reminded the faithful it is not God who abandons us when we sin, but it is we who separate ourselves from him by sinning. “We know that the state of sin distances us from God. Yet that does not mean that God distances Himself from us. The state of weakness and confusion that results from sin is one more reason for God to remain close to us. The certainty of this should accompany us throughout our lives.”

So before Lent grows too old, renew yourself in the Sacrament of God’s pardon.

When God chooses your Lenten Penance

Magicians will tell you that their acts are successful because of misdirection.

The audience is looking for one thing and the magician manipulates something else to achieve his end.

Often we use this misdirection to deal with our own lives. We look away or dismiss something as someone else's fault not our own. We don't take responsibility for our failings. We stayed up too late watching television and didn't finish a report but it is the boss's fault because the deadline was too short. Students blame teachers, children blame parents and parents blame others instead of themselves. During Lent we are guilty of misdirection at times. Not with blame maybe but certainly our eyes are not focused on the prize.

In good faith many good Catholics look for things to do, penances to take on in the spirit of this penitential season. The best penances, some spiritual writers claim, are not those we select for ourselves, because they can give rise to pride. We tend to give up chocolate, or that time wasting television show. We promise to put an extra donation in at Sunday Mass.

And we look at ourselves in four weeks and proclaim – we are the best! We did it, a quick pat on the back and then we go right back to our old ways.

What we could be doing instead, is looking at our own lives and the penances we already have. Perhaps, we have a sister or brother, or ageing parent who for whatever reason we



have lost touch with. Perhaps, they asked us for favours when we know our time is stretched so thin already. God asks us during this Lenten season to look at that family cross

we bear more closely. That cross is not a penance we chose ourselves to conquer but one God fits to our backs with every intention of making sure we know it is there. Not as a punishment, but as a method of making us whole, and the best disciples we can be, living the Word of God.

It might be harder than keeping sweets out of our mouths for a few weeks. But we know that God has our best interest at heart. He knows what we need much better than we do. He can guide us in a way we wouldn't have seen. Lent should be a time of moving closer to God,

and that means listening to his suggestions. So perhaps this Lent we can try to accept the penances we already have.....as gifts from a loving God.

THE DONKEY

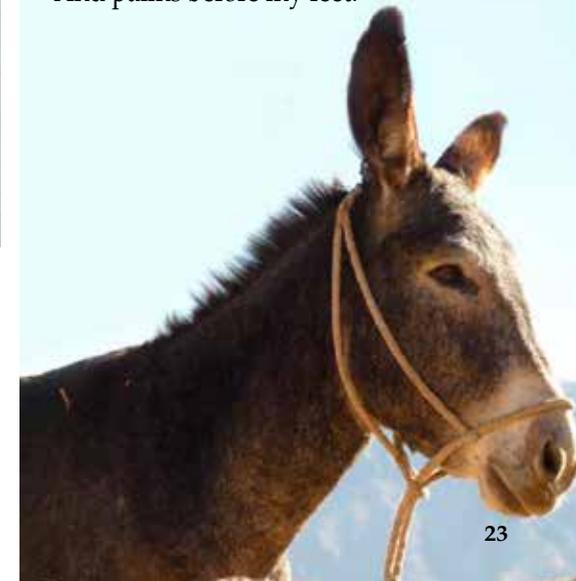
G.K. Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.



Inner
is **Purity**
more important
than **Outward**
Cleanliness

