



# ***BONAVANI***

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*OCT- 2020*

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*Feast of*  
**St. Francis of Assisi**  
*Father and Founder*

St. Bonaventure Province,  
Maharashtra



CAPUCHIN FRANCISCAN  
Province of St. Bonaventure, Maharashtra

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CORONAVIRUS AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST

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# Editorial



Br. Malcolme Periera  
OFM, Cap.

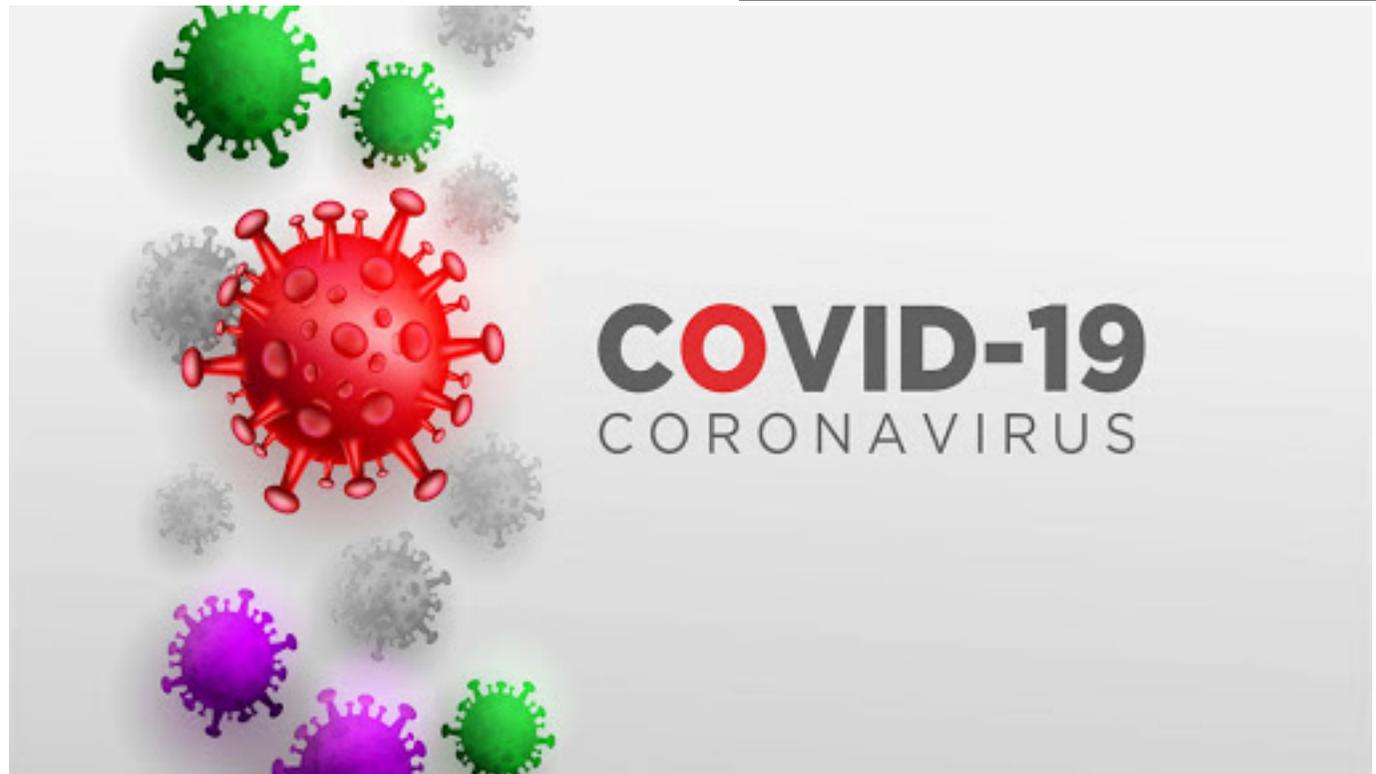
The Hollywood movie “Lion” (2016) is based on a true story of a five-year-old Indian boy who was accidentally separated from his biological mother. He was adopted by an Australian couple and, 25 years later, reunited with his biological mother after finding his hometown via Google Earth. It was an emotional reunion between mother and son. His mother was overwhelmed with joy. When asked what kept her going in life after

losing her son, her answer was hope. Hope kept her alive. She hoped that one day her son will be reunited with her. Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness

Today we are going through a difficult time. The pandemic has affected us so badly that people are losing the hope of survival. From the Justinian Plague of sixth century to the Spanish flu of last century, pandemics have triggered the collapse of empires, weakened pre-eminent powers and institutions,

created social upheaval and brought down wars.

The COVID-19 pandemic is considered as the most crucial global health calamity of the century and the greatest challenge that the humankind faced since the Second World War. The world has been put in a Great Lockdown. As the health and human toll grows, the economic damage is already evident. Unemployment rate in the world has shot up to the levels not seen since the end of Second World War. The day labourers who



are finding hard to make ends meet lead a hand to mouth existence. The pandemic has profound psychological and social effects. The Covid-19 crisis has increased suicide rates during and after the pandemic. Pope Francis during his address to the community of the Saint Francis of Assisi Hospital in Rio de Janeiro, July 24, 2013 had said, “Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! And not only that, but I say to us all: let us not rob others of hope, let us become bearers of hope.”

A question that comes to our mind is how can we have hope when everything looks hopeless? In Romans 5:3-5, Paul says that we can rejoice in our sufferings because we are a people of hope: “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us”

Rejoicing in suffering does not mean celebrating when bad news comes. But, it does mean that we can believe that God is doing a redemptive work. He is using our hurts and disappointments to shape and build us into the image of Jesus. In our current situations, God is saying to us that his grace is sufficient,

and even when we feel weak, he is making us stronger than we have ever been. We may hear voices telling us to just quit, give up, and let it go. Don’t stop. Remember the greater the attack against us, the greater Christ is in us, but we have to rely on his presence, his provision and his power. God is our hero of hope. He has never given up on us. He has great trust and hope in us.

St. Francis was a bearer of hope whose manner of living became focused on renewing the embodied, daily experience of Christian life by prioritizing the fundamentals of Gospel values in service to the poor and the forgotten. He listened to Jesus at the church of San Damiano: “Go and repair my church which, as you see, is in ruins”. We know that the church of San Damiano is a metaphor for the entire Church. While Francis listened to the voice of Jesus from the cross, he also embraced his own cross. We all know how difficult it is to carry our crosses, and Francis bore his very well.

Through his poverty and holiness, he showed us how to gain spiritual treasures. He strove to live the Gospel in simplicity, and became a living example of the transforming power of the love of God.

Near the end of the Fifth Crusade, in

August 1219, St. Francis of Assisi travelled to Egypt to meet with a Muslim leader, Sultan Malik al-Kamil. St. Francis’ name has been linked to two strong desires of our human hearts — peace among peoples and dialogue among religious believers. Francis gave hope of peace and dialogue between two communities

Even St. Francis struggled when he was founding this order but he never lost hope. People knew him as a peasant from Assisi but deep down inside of him, he had discernment. God sent a message that the Church had to come back to being poor and that is why he is known as the patron of poverty.

May Saint Francis continue to inspire us and help us not to lose hope but become bearers of hope. Wish you all a very happy feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

# CAPUCHIN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC



**Br. Philip Gonsalves,  
OFM. Cap.**

We are living in the midst of pandemic uncertainties. The situation is very much alarming above all becoming worse instead of better. Our existence is threatened and one begins to wonder with few issues at hand. Why so long the time to find a vaccine? How long this lockdown and unlocked process is going to be? What is going to be the outcome of this pandemic? We have seen the time before the Covid 19, lived and are living our life during the pandemic and we are all



perplexed as to what awaits for us. I would like to reflect with you 'Life after the Pandemic'. I am not a foreteller or fortune teller and certainly not a prophet of doom, rather a voice asking to be patient, prudent, alert, and sensitive and be realistic.

## **Before Pandemic**

The coronavirus, which surfaced in a Chinese seafood and poultry market late last year, has spread at least 213 countries, killing more than 956438 and sickening more than 30351723 in a matter of months, on 31st Dec last year, China alerted WHO to several cases of unusual Pneumonia in Wuhan, a city of 11 million people. The WHO declared the situation a pandemic. But we in India were busy in preparing to welcome Mr. Trump in Gujrat, Until February 2020, we had our life normal, we walked, talked, expressed so easily. We carried forward our life with nothing in mind. We were busy and absolutely had no time. The life was routine and exchanges were normal. We had no worries about eating, health issues, jobs, and bank-balance. We lived day after day even not thinking that next month Covid 19 will struck our country and we would be locked down for months together. When the things were happening in Italy, China and America we were under conjecture that nothing will happen to us. At the initial stage, we sent many YouTube, formed poems and to certain extent went about making fun of all that was told and said.

## **During Pandemic**

Slowly we became aware of virus, its seriousness and the consequences. Humanitarian acts were done, prayer services conducted, many lives lost and many were affected with corona virus, got admitted in the hospitals, some even lost their lives and were not given a final farewell by their beloved people. The precautionary measures like, use of regular mask, limiting our movements, constant use of sanitizers, cleansing and immediate actions taken in case of sneezing, fever and headache. Thanks be to God that none of our friars were affected and God protected us from all dangers. Deep down in our heart there should be an attitude of gratitude to God for all the blessings of good health and safety given to us.

We are in the period of pandemic, we have seen the suffering of the people especially the migrants, the lockdown and the economic slowdown have seen a disproportionate loss of income among those living at the peripheries. There's increased feeling amongst the marginalised people that they are forgotten and "voiceless". The fear of the stranger has grown during this crisis, while the border may have been closed for health reasons there has been a hardening of heart against the other or non citizens. People from the cities were not welcomed in their own na-

tive villages and so on. How long it is going to last no one can say anything. The Russian claiming to bring Vaccine by November in India, Harsh Vardhan the Minister of health and family welfare predicts to have an indian vaccine in the beginning of 2021, so also the Oxford and others have their own predictions. The future seems to be blink and blank, the road to walk is less travelled. In such a pathetic situation I wish to be a voice, reflecting with you what Pope Francis called it 'Life after the pandemic'. He deals with two important objectives: "The first is to suggest direction, keys, and guidelines for rebuilding a better world that might be born from this crisis of humanity. The second objective is ... to sow hope."

## **After the Pandemic**

So far we are not aware how much damage the pandemic has done to our people. It has exacerbated social and economic division in society. The death due to pandemic is enormous but there is a fear lurking on us as what will happen after the post lockdown. There could be fear of losing more lives from poverty than from virus itself. We see the economy of the country has gone down to -24% , many have lost job, while others have no money to buy the basic necessities of life. This pandemic could be called "Poverty pan-

demic". It has created poverty and poor. Soon we will see the outcome of it. Our country has severely suffered from this lockdown and it will take years to overcome the losses. The pandemic has taken the world back from its progression to depression. We could even call it a period of recession. There is total downturn, collapse and decline not only in economic field but also in our relationship in the form of social distancing, cultural barrier and religious stoppage. It is going to create a huge unemployment and as a consequence there will be robbery, killing and unwanted ways of gathering the possessions. The individuals and families are suffering due to this pandemic, though not known. Institutions and companies are shut, the work is stopped; there is some sort of bankruptcy. The religious institutions too suffered since the temples, mosques and churches are closed. People will gradually ask the question: Where was God in the difficult times? Do we need places of worship or should we attain the religious services online? It has damaged one's belief system and religious practices. Will the people turn to religious services? The challenges that are to come after the pandemic should not make us hopeless rather we need to seek solution to the problem.

## Capuchin Response to the Pandemic

As people of faith and hope our response is certainly the response of the church. Pope Francis did not remain silent or unseen while the world was overtaken by a silent and unseen virus. He immediately made his voice heard through various ways and allowed the entire world to see their shepherd at prayer. Apart from prayer and voice of the people, I would say our Capuchin response consists of healing the world suffering from the pandemic infirmities. My response could be summarized with five-fold understandings namely, 1. Silence and solitude, 2. Solidarity, 3. Sensitivity, 4. Sacrifice, and finally 5. Service.

By silence and solitude, I mean we should be people of prayer and God experience. It is only the person of God experience will be able to show solidarity with others. Jesus who had his experience of abba was able to relate that experience with others especially, suffering, migrants, unemployed, poor, children and least and last. Jesus not only showed solidarity but also was sensitive to the needs of the others. He says, 'I came not to be served but to serve and to give my life as ransom for many'.

Capuchins in the past have been part of the pandemic and other sicknesses. They had laid their lives. And it was possible be-

cause they were people of prayer and men of God which did not stop them from showing solidarity with suffering humanity and being sensitive to their needs. Their service was commendable to the point that they preferred starvation and sacrifices in order to feel the needs of the other. The call of God to St. Francis, "go rebuild my house" is God's call to us today. May be in different setting and in different period of time., it certainly challenges us to respond. What is my response to the present pandemic situation? Let me conclude with the words of Pope Francis saying, "If we act as one people, even in the face of other epidemics that threaten us, we can make a real impact. May we find within us the necessary antibodies of justice, charity and solidarity. ... We must not be afraid to live the alternative- the civilization of love. In this time of tribulation and mourning, I hope that where we are, we will be able to experience Jesus who comes to meet us, greets us and says: "rejoice". And may this greeting mobilize us to invoke and amplify the Good News of the kingdom of God".

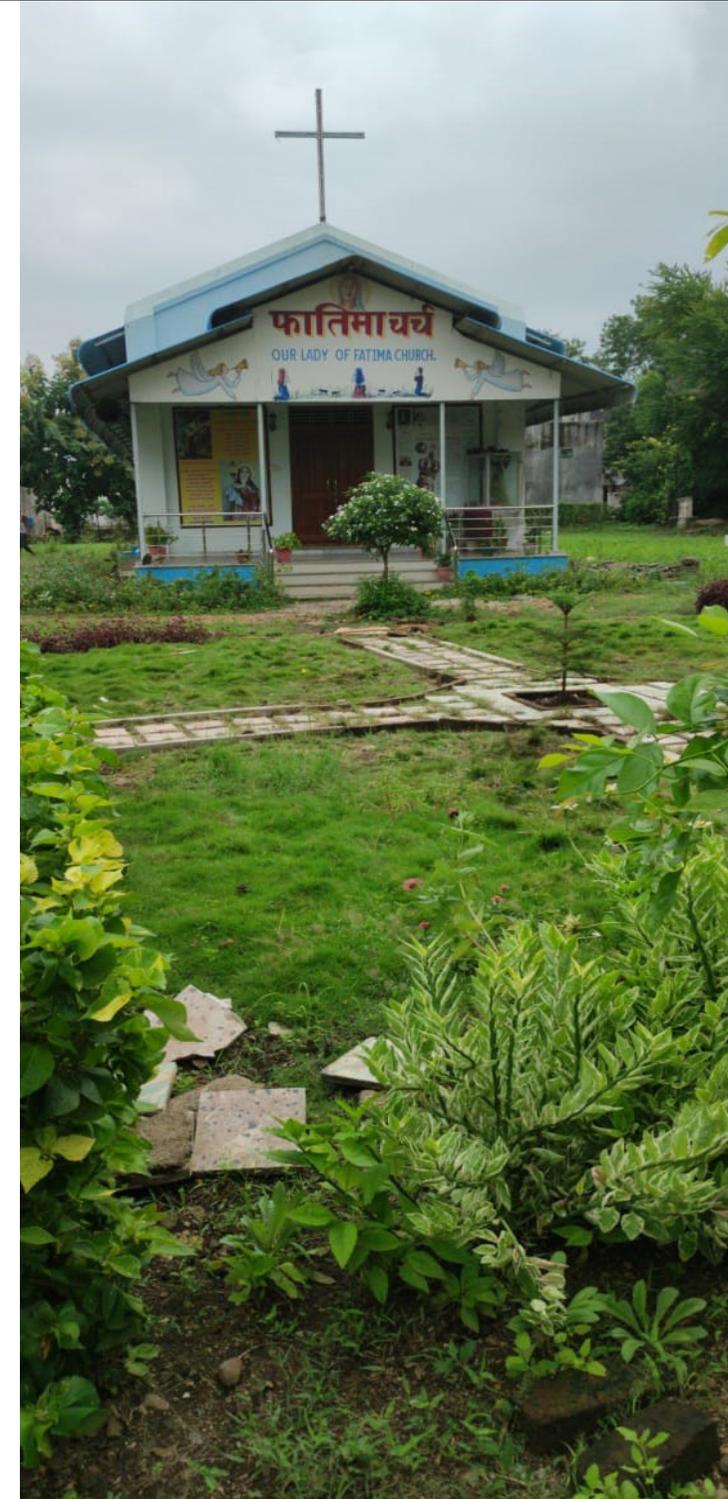
Wishing each one of you a very happy feast of our Holy Father Francis. May the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.



## OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH, AKOT

My dear brothers and sisters we are right now in the moment of pandemic, facing all the challenges and difficulties with stronger faith. This pandemic has brought us together as one family. We have been rendering our service both spiritually or materially. Here we would like to thank you for supporting our mission in Akot and Sanglud through your prayers and encouragement. In this moment of pandemic through the help of Caritas India (JVS), Manos Unidas (Fatima sisters, Malkapur), Charity Sisters Akola, Akot Parishiners and with the help of my friends we could reach out to 260 families by providing rations. We mostly distributed in tribal and needy areas of Akot block, and Sanglud village.

Through the Grace of God and through your prayers we tried to reach out to our faithful through different means like social media, by visiting their families, listening to them and trying to solve their problems. We celebrated Eucharist by keeping in mind the norms of the government. Distribution of communion and spiritual practices we carried on so that people may be strengthened in their faith in these disturbances of Pandemic. I humbly request you all to continue to pray for our mission and the people around so that we may really give them the Christ experience.



## ST. PADRE PIO NOVITIATE, KATTA.

“Each friend represents a world in us, a world not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.”

Hello brothers, we are glad to share our life events with you.

- **Feast of St. Bonaventure :**

“Since happiness is nothing else than the enjoyment of the Supreme Good, and the Supreme Good is above us, no one can enjoy happiness unless he rises above himself.  
-Saint Bonaventure

- **St. Bonaventure’s life is what every Christian’s life is meant to be;**

a steady courage to face the ups and downs of life, the call to love and forgive, to be concerned for the needs of others, to deal with crisis great and small, and to have our feet solidly on the ground of total trusting love and dependence on God. We Celebrated the

feast of St. Bonaventure, Our patron and guide. This year we had Novenas and Liturgy which was well organized and appreciated by our novices. It was wonderful experience and all of us benefited through the intercession of St. Bonaventure.

- **Nuevo Comienzo:**

“You can learn new things at any time in your life if you’re willing to be a beginner. If you actually learn to like being a beginner, the whole world opens up to you.” Our brothers arrived from Goa on 14th May for the year of Novitiate. We had inauguration for our new academic Year and vestation of our brothers on 15th May 2020. Novice master and Fr. Benhur encouraged our brothers with their inspiring message. Brothers were cheerful and glad to witness the inaugural ceremony and receive Capuchin habit.

- **Viva Sao Joao:**

Sao Joao festival in Goa is a wonderful cele-



bration of traditions and beliefs. We at Katta and Kasal celebrate this feast with gusto. On this occasion, people take out parades while singing Mando and various religious hymns. People participating in the Sangodd are dressed in a uniform to distinguish them from other groups. This is also the time when one's adventurous spirit comes to the surface. We celebrated the feast of St. John the Baptist. It was sad that we couldn't celebrate this year due to pandemic. Many people did not forget to send us sweets.

- **Feast of Mary our Mother :**

“The veneration of the Virgin Mary has accompanied the path of the Church from the beginning; Marian feast days began to appear already in the fourth century: in some the role of the Virgin in the history of salvation is exalted; in others the principal moments of her earthly life are celebrated.”- Pope Benedict XVI. Feast of the Nativity of our Mother was celebrated with enthusiasm at Katta as well as Kasal. It was touching to see that all the parishiners wanted to join us for the Novenas and prayers. Their sentiments of respect for Mother Mary was so amazing that it was painful to say no to few to join us for the celebration. Fr. Rakesh, our new priest in

charge, celebrated the festal mass. He emphasized in his homily that we need to be firm in our faith and ask for the help of our Holy Mother. His message was well appreciated by all. Our people felt happy and fortunate to pray during the days of Novenas.

- **Feast of St Padre Pio :**

“Among you I am your brother, on the altar I am your victim, in the confessional I am your judge.” -St Padre Pio. We were glad to celebrate the feast of St Padre Pio on 23rd September. It was also a day of recollection. Our brothers from Devbagh and Bishop's house joined us for prayers and celebration. Fr. Cajetan gave a wonderful message. All the brothers experienced bond of friendship and love and someone said “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” We enjoyed the company of every brother who brought lots of happiness to our community.

This is it, dear brothers, from St.Padre Pio Novitiate, Katta. The pain of parting is nothing to the joy of meeting again. “God be with you till we meet again!”



## GURU-DARSHAN, (OLCA) PIMPRI



### **Gurudarshan speaks again....**

Our new community of Gurudarshan along with Fr. Amrut, Allwyn and Jameson are very much delighted to meet you again through the pages of Bonavanni.

### **Welcome and Farewell:**

Fr. Allwyn and Fr. Jameson arrived on 7th of August. The guardian Fr.

Amrut welcomed them whole heartedly to the community. We had a day of recollection, during prayer service Fr. Michael strengthened the bond of our community life by his inspiring talk.

Fr. Ronny and Fr. Alfred were given solemn farewell. They left for their new communities on 12th of August. Fr. Amrut reached them to their respective places.

### **Prayer service:**

The diocese of Poona Under the spiritual guidance of Bishop Thomas had kept 40 days of prayer and fasting along with prayer service, consist of Holy Hour, in order to get rid of Covid 19. We were fortunate to conduct the holy hour on the Feast day of St. Clare that is 11th of August, we had it on diocesan level. It was well participated and appreciated by the Faithful of Poona diocese and by others.

### **Visitation:**

We were so fortunate and blessed with the visit of our own friars/brothers during months of July, August and September. The Provincial Minister Fr. Philip Gonsalves, Vicar Provincial Fr. Benher, Frs. Michael, Wilson

Gaikwad, Walter Pen, Wilson D'souza, Wilson Rumao, Nitin D'Souza, Suhas Pereira, Isaac D'Souza Albert Pegado, Ramesh Bhoya and La -Verna brothers brought Joy, life and laughter to our community.

### **Birthday of Mother Mary and Annual feast of OLCA Church:**

We began the novena celebration by hoisting the flag on 29th of August, followed by Mass, preaching and Novena. Per day we had three Masses. On 8th of September we had solemn Mass. On this festival day we also celebrated our annual feast of our OLCA Church. All the parishioners according to area wise actively participated and animated the liturgy keeping in mind the rules and regulations of Covid-19. The liturgical celebration was screened live on YouTube channel. Many devotees were helped spiritually and physically as well.

### **Online Catechism:**

Due to Covid 19 pandemic children are not able to come to church for their spiritual need. Fr. Amrut had a meeting with Catechism teacher and the input session was given by Fr. Osban Futardo (SDB). We have 19 catechism teachers who are actively involved in online catechism. Parish children are gaining spiritual knowledge online and

enjoying it, parents are also actively involved. Sincere thanks to our catechism teachers for sacrificing their valuable time and helping the students. A big thanks to them from OLCA Parish team.

### **OLCA @ spiritual Nourishment:**

Spiritual ministry is the very life of a priest and it occupies an important space in the heart of our community. St. Padre Pio says If we only knew.... HOW GOD REGARDS THE EUCHARIST WE WOULD RISK OUR LIVES TO CELEBRATE AND BE PRESENT AT EVERY MASS. Along with Fr. Amrut we Frs. Allwyn and Jameson are regular in giving spiritual food in the form of celebrating the Holy Mass, recollection, confession and conducting holy hour and healing prayer service for people. Mother Teresa sisters are regularly helped for their spiritual needs by Fr. Amrut.

### **Charity @ Gurudarshan:**

"In giving we receive" are the words of our founder St. Francis of Assisi, which inspire us to do charity and reach out to the people. These words are indeed miracles for us and we have experienced and witnessed to this. Whenever we were generous to whoever came to our door and shared whatever food grains we had, we were blessed with double

fold by our generous giver.

Brothers thank you very much for being part of life and formation. We bid you good bye and see you soon...wish you all happy feast of our Patron and founder. St. Francis of Assisi. God bless you all.

*Keep safe, take care.*



## LA VERNA BYTES

Fraternal greetings to all the readers of Bonavani and join with us as we share all the latest happenings from La Verna Theologate, Pune

### **New Year, New Start**

The new academic year saw fresh faces arriving in our community, where we welcomed Fr. Benher Patil, as the new Rector of the House. The community members welcomed Fr. Benher in their midst and made him comfortable with the new settings.

### **A time for Double Celebration**

The community was in for a pleasant surprise when news poured in that Fr. Benher (Vicar-Provincial) and Fr. Suhas (Fourth Councillor) were appointed as councillors in the new Provincial team. The community congratulated them for their new responsibility and wished them all the best for their future term.

### **Get, Set, Go.....**

Due to Covid 19 pandemic situation along with its various restrictions we had a low-key inauguration of the new academic year 2019-



20, on 7th June with the Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Benher, the Rector presided over the Eucharistic celebrations and wished the brothers a fruitful year ahead.

### **Adieus Brothers....**

The community gave a fitting farewell to Fr. Michael and Fr. Wilson Gaikwad who would leave the community to take over the new responsibilities assigned to them. The brothers presented a short program and Fr. Rector appreciated the contribution and selfless service rendered by both of them and wished them all the success in their respective assignments.

### **Benvenuto Brothers....**

The absence of Fr. Michael and Fr. Wilson Gaikwad was soon filled by Fr. Benjamin and Fr. Isaac who were appointed in the La Verna community. Fr. Rector welcomed the new faces in our community and prayed for a blessed and fruitful stay in La Verna.

### **Parting Notes**

Thanks for sharing our joy and on parting note we wish all the readers of Bonavani a Happy Feast of our Father Francis!!!!

# CAPUCHIN ASHRAM NEWS

## Hello brothers!

Now is particularly challenging time in the world. How are you all? Are you doing well? Our prayers are there for all of you. We hope that this situation gets under control soon. Please take good care of your health and the health of others and stay safe.

## Outgoing

For every beginning, there is an end. Brs. Robin, Justin, and Rackson after their philosophical studies left the place for their regency program. We wished them all the very best for their future. A month after with deep sadness in our hearts we bid farewell to our Br. Rakesh & Br. Malcolm Patil. They had been rendering their services in our community. They were very much helpful to the community as well as to our neighboring communities. Br. Rakesh is transferred to Katta as a parish priest and Br. Malcolm Patil also as a parish priest went to Latur.

## Incoming

Capuchin Ashram is blessed with new efficient formators in the person of Br. Leo

## D'Monte and Br. Malcolm Pereira.

A new environment, new experiences, and a new place create interest and anxieties. The new brothers arrived in our community with a lot of aspirations to begin a new chapter of their life.

Dear brothers Capuchin ashram welcomes you warmly and wishes you a pleasant stay here.

## Perfect Gift

We thank our God for the gift of community. Now we have our new guardian and rector Br. Brain Bandy, asst. rector and treasurer Br. Malcolm Pereira, Br. Leo D'Monte, and Br. Terrance D'Silva and we are all together 16 brothers. All of us strive to achieve what God has designed for us through our living together and sharing in his ministry.

## Celebrations

Each day offers a reason to celebrate, Find it and experience true bliss.

## Parent's day

We had a solemn Mass, we prayed for every parent of our brothers, and in the afternoon we enjoyed a Badakhana. The evening had been stolen by a special program, brothers had to share qualities of their parents and it was well presented with PPT and well organized, we enjoyed to the full.

## JohnMaryViyany

We Wished fathers for their valuable work for us and also we had a small cultural program in the evening.

## Birthday babies of this time

God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well.

We had several occasions to celebrate the gift of life. The birthday brothers were Brs. Terrance, Jordan, Jostin, Elias & Oliver. On these days of joy, there were a solemn Eucharist, sumptuous meals, and delicious cakes were sliced. It was an occasion to thank God for our brothers and their commendable gift for our province in various capacities. We wished them well and prayed so that their committed and exemplary life becomes a gift to God and others.

## Teacher's day

A good teacher can ignite the imagination, inspire hope, and instil a love for learning in a child. A teacher understands the past, lives the present, and creates the future. So to celebrate this day meaningfully first we had Eucharistic Celebration in our chapel followed by teacher's day celebration at the Divyadaan institute of philosophy. Our brothers participated in various activities of the program. It was indeed marvellous.

### Nativity Of Our Lady

We had a grand celebration of the nativity of our lady with solemn Eucharist and in the evening we had a special rosary prayer.

### Experiences of this pandemic

#### Ministers being Online

When the world was facing the problem of pandemic. Our catholic faithful did not have masses, prayer services in the churches. Therefore, Br. Rakesh along with brothers had planned online services to nourish the faithful spiritually.

#### Brothers being online

Due to pandemic brothers had to attend online classes The PowerPoints were extremely helpful. The class notes that followed each chapter were very well detailed and systematic. Brothers had to face some unique assignments such as watching a video and writing a summary, composing a hymn, and quizzes.

We salute the forefathers who made the great path for a great success.

Attention! Stand at ease! Salute! These are the few terms often repeated on 15 August. After a solemn mass, we had a flag-hoisting program in the house itself because of the pandemic. It began with creative march past. Br. Dean delivered a beautiful and thought-pro-



voking speech and Br. Rector delivered a heart-burning message: “In this pandemic, we have to be Corona warriors, not corona carriers.

*We thank one and all and wish  
A very happy feast of our Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi.*

## FATIMA FRIARY, KIROL

Lock down and Shut down has Come down  
and Countdown has Slow down!

When the poet John Donne was struck down by a sudden infection in 1623, he immediately found himself alone – even his doctors deserted him. The experience, which only lasted a week, was intolerable. He later wrote: “As sickness is the greatest misery, so the greatest misery of sickness is solitude.”

In this country of 1.3 billion humans, the crowds had vanished. Bodies etherised from the streets as if they never existed. For people of our parents’ generation and political inclinations, this must have been nostalgia — a throwback to the discipline of the emergency and the two wars they have lived through.

For us as religious living in Modi-Shah ruled country, where every movement and gesture of ours is censored, this was simply and profoundly a reprieve. A time to walk solitary, unseen, un-touched, and un-fol-  
lowed in this otherwise belligerent country.

Some suffered and some enjoyed during this Coronavirus pandemic. Some



enjoyed during the COVID-19 crisis solitude while few suffered isolations. As religious, as Capuchins each one of us, each friary of our Province has his/its own story to tell. As the invisible enemy continues to be with us the nagging feelings that we as individuals and as a nation, quickly revert to business as usual within days of being unlocked has come true.

Looking at Ghatkopar market we feel that we have relapsed like the unrepentant prisoner who re-offends hours after being released from jail. Like a dog going back to its vomit we may go to not washing our hands with soap even after it’s been in all kinds of unmentionable places; to spitting anywhere

we please; to trashing our environment to build our dream-homes, flying around needlessly and pillaging the earth to mine its natural bounty; to letting our public health sector go to seed through inadequate funding, poor governance and zero accountability.

In fact, when the lockdown started, good many of us were ecstatic. Because no Provincial Chapter, no transfers, no preaching, no visiting, no school work. The sun was shining. We were happy, and confident that things would be okay. But after a while, the reality of the situation started to sink in.

The novelty of being at home all the time wore off and we all started to struggle.

We might have suffered from regular panic attacks, frozen on the floor in our rooms, unable to move or speak, having nightmares most nights, and struggled to sleep. It was as if we were stuck, trapped in our own rooms or friaries and on our own heads.

However, over time, we found ways to deal with the pressure. We realised that lockdown gave us more time to do the things we loved, hobbies that had been previously swamped by religious or schoolwork.

Almost as life is falling slowly and screamingly with mask and social distance to normalcy, we can say emphatically that no matter how scared, or trapped, or alone we feel, things can only get better. We have to take time to revisit the things we love and remember that all of this will eventually pass. All we can do is to look forward to a better future.

One big lesson we suppose all must have learnt from the lockdown is that we have to learn to be happy with the simple things in our religious life because they are the best things. We have few things to share with you which are simple in nature but grandeur in structure.

**Time to say thank you and God be with you.....**

Br. Leo D'monte the Parish Priest of Ki-

rol Church and the Manger of Fatima School was thanked online. It was hard for the parishioners to say goodbye as he had won the hearts of all the parishioners through his dedicated service. Br. Anil Gonsalves who in a period of one year through his hard work had won the hearts of all the friars was given send-off with heavy hearts. Br. Prakash Tuscano the long-time Vocation Promoter and S.F.O in charge was thanked for his valuable service and hard work.

#### **New Arrivals:**

Though we are still battling with Corona, show has to go on. The vacuum created by the above-mentioned brothers was filled by the arrival of Bros. Michael Gonsalves, Manuel Fernandes, Ronny Pereira and Rajesh D'souza. Though right now everything is online business we have more time to spend with the Lord and for each other building the brotherhood stronger and stronger.

#### **Home Quarantine:**

Br. Suhas Pereira who came from Switzerland was home quarantine in our community. He was too good in maintaining social distance. All the community members wished that his quarantine period should have been little longer so that we could have had more fun and laughter.

#### **Zoom Teachers Day:**

This year teacher's day in the school was on Zoom. Br. Victor Bandya and Br. Walter Pen took lot of trouble to organize this event. It was all together a different and memorable event with lot of new things to learn and experience.

#### **Extending the Helping Hand:**

Br. Provincial, Br. Walter and Br. Nitin had special apostolate during this pandemic to reach all the stranded brothers to different fraternities. Good job indeed!

#### **Sad Demise:**

Benefactress of the Capuchins and very famous among all the friars our beloved Lucy Bai went to her heavenly home in the mid-September. In spite of the pandemic, led by Br. Provincial, six brothers: Michael, Robert, Nitin, Manuel and Rajesh went to pay last respect and conduct the funeral right at St. Anthony Church, Vakola. The Parish Priest of St. Anthony Church was really impressed to see all the friars and he said, "Fathers she loved your Order and you also returned that love by your precious presence."

#### **By Road to Velankani:**

They say where there is will there is a way. By roadway, Br. Ronny Pereira went to

Velankani, Tamil Nadu, to celebrate the Eucharist and to preach. Today he has become well known preacher. Thanks to Lady Corona! He was on television twice a day, celebrating and preaching in Marathi and East Indian. He is booked for another two years for the same ministry.

#### **Retreat Preacher:**

Br. Nitin D'souza the Provincial Secretary after doing all his work on time found time to preach retreat to sisters at Kurla convent. You can consider this as an advertisement and book him in advance.

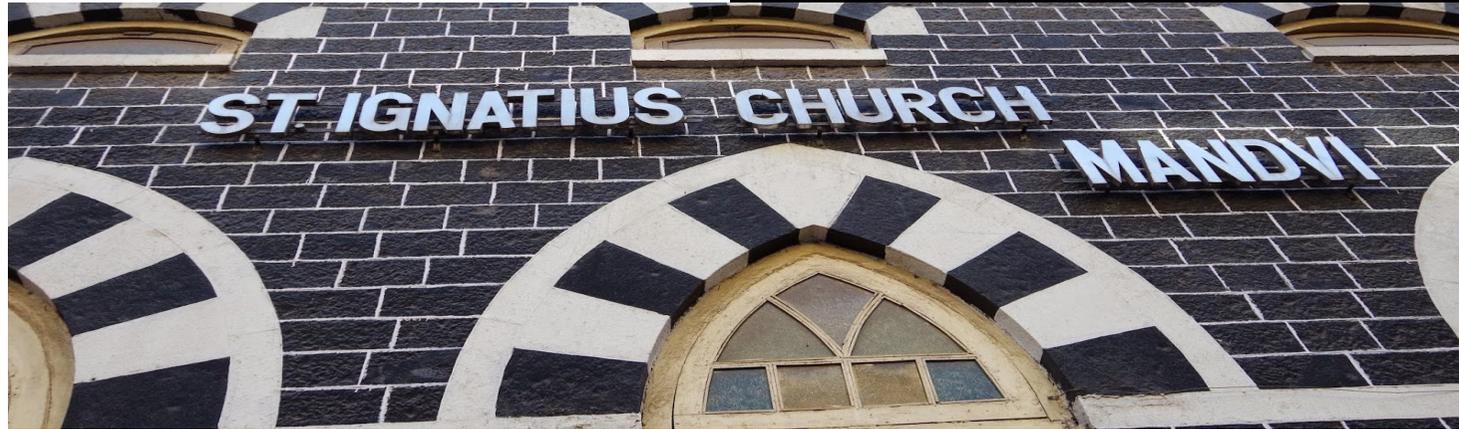
#### **Provincial Council Meeting:**

The community was happy to have all the councillors with us. Their presence brought joy to our community.

#### **Fish Bonanza:**

Thanks to Br. Victor's family and few friends from Dharavi belt, we had lot of variety of fish. Bros. Michael and Manuel who are good at cooking, out of their generosity made variety of dishes and that has led the community to say one common prayer, "May their visa be delayed Lord."

*Thank you, brothers. See you soon.*



## **ST. IGNATIUS FRIARY, MANDVI**

'Change the way we live and live the way we change' is the new maxim of the day as the COVID-19 pandemic is changing us as individuals and as a society. The implications will be far-reaching and some of them are still beyond our comprehension.

When humans went into a lockdown, the earth quietly went about reclaiming itself. On the 50th anniversary of the World Earth Day on April 22 this year, the World Health Organisation Chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, "Covid-19 is reminding us of a simple but vital truth: we are one species, sharing one planet."

So also like mother earth, the Pandemic that has surfaced on the earth has enveloped our being to delve into the existing reality and to make effort to heal ourselves. Many countries are scrupulously studying and working towards the possibility to find a vaccine for Covid-19 and get free from the alarming situation. One of the method to combat the spread of the Pandemic was lockdown. The lockdown may have made us insular, but it also brought the world closer. What we have learned is indeed marvelous and overwhelming. We started caring, loving and accepting one another as brothers and sisters. Many generous people came forward and contributed their mite for others in need to make this world a better place. To continue our daily activities the world went digital and took to technology, reaching out to the community. We also adapted to 'Work from Home' (WFH), and used

video-conferencing for work calls and family socials. As followers of St Francis we cannot remain aloof from alleviating the sufferings of the world so we have also adapted ourselves by carrying out our responsibilities in this difficult times and given witness to our life and mission.

### Some of the happenings of the community are:

**1. Transfers and transit:** The new community of Mandvi consist of three friars Fr. Ronny Vaz, Fr. Simon D'Britto and Fr. Joseph D'Souza. As Fr Brandon Noon who was here serving in the community was transferred to Parbhani, the community as well as the parish gave him a fitting farewell, acknowledged his services to the friary and church and wished him well for his future assignments. Being in the lockdown and not much activity Fr Ronny Vaz was welcomed by the Friars and parishioners as he took over as the Guardian of the Friary and parish priest of St Ignatius Church, Mandvi. It was a meaningful Eucharistic celebration.

**2. Pastoral concerns:** During the lockdown our pastoral ministry called us to go where people need us. There were a couple of deaths in the parish and out of which only one we could conduct the funeral rites in the Church as well as in the Sewree cemetery as

per the direction of the civil authorities.

**3. Spiritual Animation:** Being with the people in difficult time is the need of the hour therefore we as community were constantly in touch with the people in and through the digital media as well as through the Eucharistic celebrations. We had a private celebration of the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary praying the Novenas and offering flowers to mother Mary. With the insistence of the devout we cannot but accede to the request of celebrating Eucharist for them in private.

**4. #WFH:** Work from home is part and parcel of every working class. We have two friars working as Principals in diocesan school who are busy with classes so that the academic and administrative work go smoothly. The dedication of the friars is noteworthy as the friars at times commute to their work place to complete the necessary task entrusted to them. More so we also maintain the community ourselves with regard to cooking and cleaning as we don't have any domestic worker.

**5. Go green be clean:** Cleanliness is next to godliness and we've finally realised it. Cleaning surfaces, wiping containers and washing hands frequently are becoming welcome habits due to the Covid-19. Without intimation we had an inspection of the



MCGM officials with regard to the cleaning of the tank and the surroundings. The visit facilitated in cleaning the entire roof top of the terrace and the repairing and cleaning of tanks. The officials were satisfied with the measures taken and were very cooperative and appreciative in their response.

In conclusion, as our ministry has begun we are looking forward with hope that the lockdown may be relaxed and we begin a new life with full vigour and enthusiasm. There is a lot to do and may St Francis our Father guide us, bless us and pray for us. United in prayer till we meet again through the pages of Bonavani.

*Wish you all a very happy feast of our founder and father St Francis.*

# ADIVASI AVAJ FROM SHELTI

## Greetings of Peace and Goodness

**Missionaries from Shelti are glad to share with you our lives.**

This year due to the pandemic COVID -19 there were no major celebrations especially Easter. Anyways we have some news to be shared that has occurred in our community.

History repeats

We are glad to share that it was Franciscan Brothers of Brorivali who first started mission work in Shelti from 1932. Later it was handed over to the Diocesan priests who did an excellent work here in the spiritual and social fields from 1935 to 1946. They built the Chapel in 1936. Later on it was renovated by Fr. Roque Fernandes (Pilar father) in 1946. And again now the work is carried forward by Franciscan Capuchin of Maharashtra from 2015.

## Birthdays celebration

Our Guardian Fr. Anthony Pereira celebrated his birthday on 10th June. Just two days before Fr. Anthony's birthday i.e. on 8th June is the birthday of Fr. Cedrick, we celebrated both birthdays together and community day as well. We had a good celebration along with the parishioners. We also celebrated the Holy Eucharist. After few days we also celebrated birthday of new regent Br. Robin Itur, who joined our fraternity on 10th June.

New mud floor in the Church

The floor of the Church is made up of mud and cow dung. Our church 'Our Lady of Rosary' is traditional and you will find Varli paintings in it, many like to visit our church and it is maintained well. Since the floor was too old and the slices of the mud was cracking out, we renovated it again and made a new mud floor.

## Good bye to Br. Pravin

On 10th June we gave farewell to Br. Pravin Bandya our Regent who rendered his

service to our community. He really worked hard in all activities; he was always enthusiastic in doing any work entrusted to him. We wished him all the best for his future studies and his ministries.

## Hearty welcome to Br. Robin

"The Lord gave me Brother", the words of St. Francis came true on 10th of June when Br. Robin, our new regent reached to our fraternity. He was accompanied by Br. Rakesh Gavtya (Rector of Capuchin Ashram) and Br. Brian Bandya (Asst. Rector of Capuchin Ashram). We thanked them sincerely, for their efforts in bringing Br. Robin to Shelti in spite of the Lockdown in the Country.

## Hostel work

Shelti Fraternity has undertaken the construction work of hostel. We started this work in 7th February 2020. We had a hard time while proceeding of this work due to pandemic and the lockdown. There was a full stop for the work for about two and half months, but the blessing of the Almighty Lord and the blessing of Our Lady of Rosary was with us and our hostel. We again resumed our hostel work towards the end of the month of May and now the work is in progress.

### **The gates of heaven opened**

We started celebrating masses in the church for our parishioners. Since we realized that there are no cases in our territory and it was safe, we began our masses from first week of June. The door of the Church was again opened for the faithful which gave a new hope of holiness to them. There was a good response of the people. We had given them proper instruction regarding coming for the mass on Sundays. Masses were well planned and we followed carefully the rules given by government.

### **Feast of Mother Mary**

It's always a great joy to celebrate the birthday of mother and it really gave us a joy and exuberant in our heart to celebrate the birthday of our Heavenly Mother on 8th September. We had a festal celebration in the church along with the parishioners. We had a Holy Eucharist in the evening; the shrine of our Lady was well decorated by Br. Robin.

### **School activity**

We all of us were aware of the tragic situation of the world due to COVID-19, the schools are shut for months together and had no hope of re-opening of the school. Various academics, institution and school as well, proceeded their learning via online. But we work in the Adivasi area where they make their ends meet with minimum ways. In such condition we could not proceed with online procedure, so we decided to call children to the school once in a week.

### **Greetings**

Our Shelti community greets you a Blessed feast of our seraphic father St. Francis of Assisi. May he bless us all.



# Good News from Osmanabad Community

A thought for reflection, “Behold how good it is when Brothers live in Unity.” Ps. 133:1

## **Outgoing and New-coming**

It is extremely emotional when Brothers go to serve in other communities. The Brs. Rony and Alwyn were officially transferred but in return we received three dynamic Brs. Xavier, Baritan and Thomas To add more joy to the community we have a simple and humble Br. Rexon for this year for community experience. Br. Guardian Albert Pegado gave them a warm welcome.

## **15th August**

The Assumption of Mother Mary was solemnly celebrated in the community by the Holy Eucharist and the Independence Day by Flag hoisting by Principal Br. Albert Gonsalves and the management as a sign of respect towards our country.

## **Teacher’s Day**

The Principal of Vidyamata along with the Head-Master and Manager presented a wonderful programme with the help of the community for the Teaching and the Non-Teaching staff. The programme was well organised.

## **Vidyamata Day**

The community celebrated the Birthday of Mother Mary on September 8th as well as the Vidyamata Day of the school.

## **Welcome to Orientation Brs.**

This year we are blessed with four Brs. It is a great joy for the community. Br. Guardian along with the community gave a warm wel-

come for the Brs. To shoulder the responsibility for the formation of Brs. this year we have Directors Brs. Baritan and Xavier.

### On-line Classes

The Brs. in our community are busy with on-line Classes. It is so pleasant to see each one helping to keep the standard of the school. Every brother in the community is trying their best.

### Maratha-Wada Muktidin on 17th September.

Our school Vidyamata celebrated Maratha-Wada Muktidin by hoisting the flag all the Brs. were present to show due respect to the Flag. This day is a memorable day for the people of Maratha-Wada.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COMMUNITY, >>>>  
LATUR

# ST. AUGUSTINE FRIARY, PARBHANI

Greetings of Peace, Joy and Happiness from the brothers of St. Augustine's friary, Parbhani. It is the 2nd year of our presence in Parbhani from where we are sharing some of our happenings of our community.

## **SUS' SWAGATAM**

This year we are blessed with the new members in our fraternity with the arrivals of Br. Brandon Noon as the Member and Br. Justin Dhavade as the regent of the house. This friary has two dimensions where our brothers work and reach out to the people in the Parish and School Ministries.

## **Pastoral Ministry**

### **Feast of the Patron Saint Augustine**

The preparation of St. Augustine began with the triduum Novenas. Though the churches were closed the fraternity decided to have Online Mass. Here we reflected on some of the qualities of St. Augustine where people could learn from his life and works. On the festal day we had a solemn mass in the Church in which fathers and sisters participated. After the Mass we had a sumptuous meal along with the sisters.

### **Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

The Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary began with the nine days of Novenas. We reflected on various qualities of Mother Mary. Though the masses were online we prayed for the parishioners with various intentions. On the Festal day we thanked all the parishioners for their prayerful participation in online mass.

## **Educational Ministry**

### **New face of life**

Today the world is advanced in technology, this year the presence of school is not like the previous years. Yet, processing towards the educational studies we have the online class via Google Meet and Classroom, where students attend the classes daily with zeal and enthusiasm.

## **God's Blessings through showers of rain**

Rains are the blessings for the farmers who cultivate for their daily livelihood. This year we have received good amount of rainfall. Some people mentioned that this is the first time in hundred years Parbhani district is blessed with good rains.

See you all again in the next issue of Bonavani. Until then goodbye, Adieu, au revoir!

*St. Augustine Friary, Parbhani.*

Hello brothers. The community at St. Joseph Umralla, consisting of Bros. Joel, Amol, and Anil, is happy to share some news and views from our fraternity with you. We hope that this sharing of ours will bring a smile on your face during this pandemic time.

### **An unprecedented life-shocker**

In the history of mankind there have been many tragedies both natural and man-made. Yet the grace of God enabled us to not only survive but to come strong out of it. This year, as you know, in March we witnessed something unprecedented. The roads and public places and transportation were out of bounce first time ever in our life time. The churches remained closed indefinitely due to the COVID-19. The faithful, however, took this in good faith as social distancing became a new norm and “stay home & stay safe” the need of the hour. We were fortunate, though, to have provided some spiritual nourishment to our people during Lent season just before the lockdown. Fr. Amrut, the vibrant preacher of our province, was invited to preach mission at St. Joseph to prepare the faithful for the mystery of the passion and resurrection of Our Lord.

### **Nothing can stop us**

Despite forced lockdown and physical distance between the faithful that made impossible for people to come together as community of faith, we were closely bonded together through prayers in spirit. We remained constantly in contact with our faithful using digital media. People continued praying and offered mass-intentions through the phone calls. The uniqueness of this year’s Holy Week liturgy being the Easter triduum celebration in church without a faithful in attendance.

# ST. JOSEPH CHURCH



### In cancelling we gain

The cancellation of the Preparatory Course for brothers making their perpetual vows added a friar to our community. To that end, Br. Julius was a welcome addition to our friary. He was well taken care of his spiritual as well as the needs of the Capuchin formation. During his stay with us he completed a three-day retreat prior to his profession during which he was given a talk, each day, on the topics related to our life and charism. And in the presence of his parents and brothers he made his Solemn Profession during the Holy Eucharist celebrated in private.

### A time for renewal

One may say that pandemic was a blessing in disguise. Somehow, it got us connected with the origin of our Capuchin charism. During the lockdown we could use our time for the good of the community in quiet acts of love and service. In the absence of our employees in the school/church, brothers together did all cleaning, maintaining, cooking, etc. during this time. It was also a time to reach out to those who lost their jobs and unable to make both ends meet. With the help of the SVP we helped to the families who were in need of daily essential goods.

### A time to say a good-bye and a welcome

After serving for six years in the parish as the Parish Priest and the guardian of the community, the “Hrudaya Samrat” of Umralla left, on August 16, to his new placement. Of course, it is none other than Br. Rajesh D. He bid a good-bye to us and we welcome our new parish priest and guardian, Fr. Anil Gonsalves.

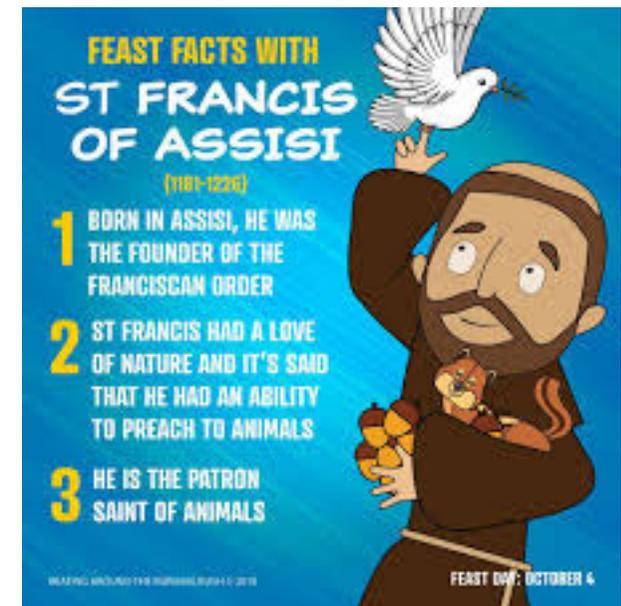
### Educating ourselves to impart online education

One of the adverse impacts of COVID-19 was seen on educational institutions. The government announced closure of all schools during this pandemic; at the same time required them to continue with the regular classes. Hence, we at Fatima School began the academic year 2020-21 with much uncertainty and anxiety. However, the boon of technology enabled us to begin the new academic year using online forum as the medium of connecting with our students. The teachers were given training, in this regard, to conduct themselves well through virtual classes and to impart education adequately. This year we have first batch of the Std. X with 21 students. We request your prayers so that this first batch of Std. X comes out with flying colours.

### Fr. Francis Senior Friars' Home

In January, this year, the foundation stone of our province infirmary was laid on the society plot in Umralla. Despite the global pandemic, the construction of infirmary continued without any interruption. Today the work is progressing at a fast pace. As a result the building has already been raised up to two floors.

As we wind up, we would like to wish you good and a lot of happiness on account of the feast of our founding father, St. Francis.



# CAPUCHIN FRANCISCAN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Br. Michael Fernandes, OFM. Cap.

I would like to reflect with you in this moment of crisis by making reference to the Unique and important experience of St. Francis in his spiritual journey and conversion. We all know from our Franciscan History that Francis had a fear and dislike towards the lepers who were in big numbers during his time in Assisi. One day, however, he met a man afflicted with leprosy while riding his horse near Assisi. Though the sight of the leper filled him with horror and disgust, Francis got off his horse and kissed the leper. Then the leper put out his hand, hoping to receive something. Out of compassion,

Francis gave money to the leper. The sight of lepers nauseated him and he would run away before this encounter, but God leading him into the company of those from whom he wanted to run away, he shows pity, care and love. As he mentions in his Testament, “what had previously nauseated me became the source of spiritual and physical consolation for me.” This experience expanded his ministry to the lepers who were served and cared for by Francis outside the town of Assisi. The entire early brotherhood got engaged in ministering the lepers, feeding them, showing care and love even by kissing their

wounds and embracing them.

Like a sudden breaking storm, the coronavirus crisis has caught us all by surprise, abruptly changing on a global level our personal, public, family and working lives. This dramatic situation, highlights the vulnerable nature of our human condition, limited as it is by time and contingency. The pandemic has also forced us to question the roots of our happiness and to rediscover the treasure of our Christian faith. It is a time of trial” which gives us the chance to reorient our lives toward God. The crisis, has shown us that, especially in times of need, we de-

pend on our solidarity with others. In a new way, it is inviting us to place our lives at the service of others. It should make us aware of global injustice and wake us up to the cry of the poor and of our gravely diseased planet. The world is suffering from the global COVID19 crisis and how the COVID19 pandemic has created the “new lepers” in our society which has brought about social and economic divisions in society. There is a fear of our family members, neighbours and colleagues who are affected by the Covid-19 and we suddenly become lepers like those of Assisi in 12th century. We are avoiding them due to infection and many of them die without the family members being close to them. Majority of them are buried or cremated without the presence of any close relatives. The fear of Covid-19 pandemic will see more deaths from rejection, abandonment, loneliness and poverty than from the virus itself. The leprosy during the time of Francis created a gap between the rich, middle class, poor, lepers etc., especially economic, spiritual and moral. Pandemic has so far seen many coming out to serve and show compassion through their charity in the form of donation and food. The urgent need is to bridge a disproportionate loss of income amongst those living at the peripheries like the lepers of Francis’ time. The immediate need of the lepers in Assisi was love, care, compassion and service. We too face the same situation where the lack of love, acceptance, food and safe shelter is on the rise. Those affected by the virus are neglected by the government and all the big projects and allocation of funds for them have not reached, so there is a lack of trust and confidence among the poor affected by Covid-19. Francis and the brothers ignored the Restrictions laid by the commune to visit and serve the lepers in order to treat them as human beings and to protect leper’s health. We see in the nook and corner of our cities and towns that many poor covid-19 patients are often

denied proper treatment and human dignity is at stake. The poor are feeling that they have been forgotten and have no one to raise voice for them. In this kind of situation what is our response as sons of St. Francis of Assisi?

There are many ways today that we can assist those whom in crisis created by the Pandemic and those whom society and government rejects—those who are down mental illness due to the fear of being affected by the virus. In the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, we can kiss and wash their wounds which are physical, emotional and spiritual created by the pandemic. We can offer them comfort or compassion. As Franciscans can we help the affected who have been going through a fear of being neglected and a stranger because they are poor? Can we contribute to the efforts of Governments towards the economic recovery from the pandemic? There are challenges and opportunities presented to the Capuchins in Maharashtra by the pandemic experience. In this isolation and crisis many have been reduced to nothing, many young ones are committing suicides, family problems are on the rise, can we offer them the emotional and spiritual support as Francis and the brothers offered to the lepers of Assisi. Can we create a sense of belonging among those affected by the Covid-19? Let us discover that we need each other. Are the friars prepared to serve with those at the periphery? It was proposed that we need to look to ensure formation experiences lead friars into the life of the marginalized, help them embrace the leper, and see the world through their eyes. In times of struggle we need to have our hearts in the right place to be able to give what little we have to those most in need.

The Covid-19 offers us a golden opportunity to have the same dramatic personal experience and orientation in our province and each individual friar that bring forth spiritual fruits. But the need of the hour is to show mercy and compassion to those affected and we will experience the mercy of God’s mercy and compassion in our own

lives.

Our Capuchin Franciscan response could be: Search for those who need our mutual support and understanding, sharing our resources and give a Capuchin Franciscan voice to them in order to overcome this crisis. During and after the Pandemic our services, apostolate and ministries could be geared up by visits, dialogue, sharing and offering emotional support to those who have recovered and the families of those victims of Pandemic. There are many Church based NGO with whom we could collaborate and cooperate by sharing our expertise and not just limit and focus on material needs. The call of God to St Francis, “Go rebuild my House”, is God’s call to us today. By now, no one needs to tell us about the impact of the pandemic we’re experiencing. There are a great number of inconveniences. There is also a lot of fear and confusion. This fear and loneliness could be a worse contagion that we spread unwittingly. In response to the growing number of COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra, we need to take a proactive measures to accommodate people who will have a different experience after the pandemic. We need to determine the most effective use of our friar’s expertise and our limited resources to help fight pandemic affected people. We have to also always remind ourselves of our responsibility to go beyond ordinary ways of looking at the reality or a difficult situation brought to us now. We also need to prepare us and others for a healthy way of living. We have universal responsibility which respects other’s right to live a healthy, dignified and safe life. Business avarice, ecological degradation, war and manipulations have torn the world apart. But now the time is ripe for the world leaders to work together, share medical information, support concretely to face the crisis and bring it to an end. As Capuchins we could respond in the following ways with faith, responsibility and fraternal goodness:

Praying to the merciful Lord, developing in us and others a positive and proactive mind set, teaching and creating awareness among the people whom we serve that seeking medical help in time is best cure, support the governmental schemes in order to arrest the Covid-19 and encourage our doctors, nurses and health workers.

Pope Francis invites us with these words coming from his heart: “We have to find the concreteness of small things, to have simple attention towards those around us, family, friends. Understand that in small things there is our treasure. There are minimal gestures that sometimes get lost in the anonymity of everyday life, however gestures of tenderness, of affection, of compassion that are decisive, and important. For example, a hot plate, a caress, a hug, a phone call are familiar gestures of attention in every day realities that make life make sense and that there is communion and communication between us. “ He said the loss of jobs along with the chance to spend more time with loved ones “suddenly opened our eyes to horizons that we have long since taken for granted”, and that the period of lockdown allowed many to rediscover “the importance of simplicity, and of keeping our eyes fixed on the essentials”.

He also said that the pandemic “has made us all the more aware of the presence of the poor in our midst and their need for help”, and that its sudden arrival sparked “a powerful sense of bewilderment and helplessness” that also demonstrated “our own need for an outstretched hand.”

# COVID 19 AND POPE FRANCIS

Br. Wilson Dsouza, OFM Cap.



We are in the midst of thick Covid 19. Everything is locked down and the cases of corona-virus are increasing lips and bound in India in general and Maharashtra in particular. We are not very sure as to when the unlocked process will begin and life will return to normal. In fact, our Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at initial stage had suggested some means and ways like clapping the hands, or ringing the bell even making noise with any instruments and secondly he also asked the nation to light a candle or anything representing light to dispel the darkness of corona virus. The people of nation without discrimination responded to the call. In the anxious moments, Pope Francis comes to our aid and suggests how the life would be during and after the pandemic.

During the pandemic, Pope Francis had taken major steps. On 27th March 2020, we spend the extraordinary moment of

prayer not only with the Pope and the church but also with entire humanity. That evening, from Vatican Pope read the gospel of Mark 4:35-41. It was stormy evening and it was heavy rain fall and in such a situation Pope Francis prayed to the Lord of the universe and creator that the storm of corona-virus be stilled and calmed. He said in his homily, "Why are you Afraid"? Due to Covid 19 we are filled with deafening silence and a distressing void. We find ourselves afraid and lost. We are caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We realize that we are fragile and disoriented. When we are caught in the storm of Covid 19 and our boat is sinking it is time to row together, comfort each other. We have the expressions of the disciples in the boat, "We are perishing Lord" (Mk 4:38). We have come to realization that with our strength and abilities we can do nothing. We need to stand together.

Yet times we might feel that Jesus is in deep sleep and has no caring nature. Can he be so rude? He is not really sleeping rather he is in communion with his Father, trusting in him. He wakes up and calms the wind and storm and then turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (Mk 4:40).

The difficulties, problems and storms above all epidemic and pandemic of life call us to check our faith. It is not that the disciples had no faith; neither can I say that we have no faith. However, the expression made by disciples could be ours. They said, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish" (Mk 4:38). In the stormy situation of the disciples and our pandemic situation of Covid 19 is same. We like apostles think God does not care. Jesus is not interested in us. This claims really wounds and leashes storms in the heart of God. In spite of this attitude he will not leave

us at the mercy of Covid 19 storm. Let us cast all our anxieties onto him, he cares about us and still tells us, ‘Do not be afraid’ (1Pet 5:7, Mt 28:5).

We are all concerned about the situation of the pandemic; however we have edifying life of the doctors, nurses, public workers, common people, religious and priests who are risking their lives to attend the sick and prevent those who are healthy from becoming infected. Our government has taken some measure to defend the people of their basic needs; some NGO’s are tirelessly working. We too are cared for, by our authorities. However, it is our burden and obligation to work for the common good. In our decision making, eating habits we need to remember the economic hardship entails the little, poor and minors of the society. It would be tragic if the opposite was prioritised, we wouldn’t be able to call ourselves as followers of St. Francis.

What we foresee is hunger especially for the people without permanent employment, the middle class family where Father was earning and rest family lived and survived are without money for last 4 to 6 months. Some of them are not able to pay the fees of their children, or electrical bill. Soon there will be violence, inhuman and criminal activities not desired but to fill the stomach it might happen. The question that we pose: What visions do we have during and after the

pandemic?

Pope Francis on Easter vigil 12th April 2020 had said, that we have to be like a new flame. Easter is a feast of hope. It does not diminish problems, but it is victory of love over the evil. We shall turn our gaze to the people who are directly affected and have died; some even were unable to bid a final farewell, to such family let good God grant comfort and hope. Covid 19 has deprived us of human closeness, consolation of the sacraments particularly Eucharist and Reconciliation. All that we need to communicate to our people is that the Lord has not left them; they are united in our prayers.

One must also look at the reality positively. Remaining at home is not punishment rather an opportunity to reflect, to withdraw from the frenetic pace of life, and stay with loved ones and enjoy their company. On the other hand for many this is also a time of worry about an uncertain future, risk of losing job, have no basic needs met. Thus the future course of action would be dying to the culture of indifference. The whole world is suffering and we need to be united in facing the pandemic, we need to grant hope to the people especially poor, the homeless and vulnerable. We need to give away self-centredness and share with others in the form of basic necessities and medicines without distinguishing between persons, caste, religions and language.

We are called to be an invisible army, through our prayers, sacrifices and love towards each other. It is not just Covid 19 but it is a great war. It is not fought with weapons but with solidarity, not individually but as a community. There are invisible armies who are fighting behind the curtain to such we salute and support.

As we are fighting together during pandemic I wish and desire that we will continue even after showing human solidarity. It should help us to free from our shaky and sleepy consciences and work for the ecological conservation, promotion of human dignity and to work hard to rebuild what we have lost. Let us stand firm and care for each other both in good and bad times. We have to have plans to rise again, to the newness of life, to that joy. We have learned one lesson from Covid 19 that it does not see caste, creed, rich and poor. We cannot save ourselves. It looked as though borders fall, walls collapse and fundamentalist discourse dissolves, even to the point that gods are made silence. All that matters is breath of the Spirit that opens horizons, awakens creativity and renews us in fraternity. The civilization of love and hope needs to be built daily. Soon or later vaccine will be found, pandemic will pass away. Will the virus of egoism ever die?

# CORONAVIRUS AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST

**Br. Benjamin Alphonso OFM. Cap.**



Today world is living in the fear of pandemic of the covid19. People feel that no more they are free to go around the world and places as they use to be before, People feel that they have lost their freedom. They do not know when they will become pray to this dangerous virus which has reached now every nuke and corner of this beautiful world. We need strength and courage to face this difficult challenge. Pope Francis in his recently Published Homilies, “Life after the Pandemic” states that we need to become people of faith and courage and we need to shade away our fears because it is God who is Master of the Universe and our Protector.

We need to trust him. He is Supreme healer and doctor. Our Lord and Master comes to us in the everyday in the Most Holy Sacrament that in the Holy Eucharist. That is the reason, why Pope Francis had Adoration of Blessed Sacraments in April 2020, to pray for the World to overcome this Pandemic situation. We need to participate and celebrate the Holy Eucharist in this spirit.

In fact, Eucharist is real food that nourishes us and enriches us with divine energy whose strength transcends all human calculations. A believer who is nourished constantly by the Holy Eucharist and revitalized by this divine energy is transformed

into a new being. His/her way of thinking, desiring, planning and behaving is gradually changed. He/she is acquiring the mind of Christ :( Phil.2:5). As a result, his/her set of values and the life pattern are slowly transformed. Thus with Paul one begins to say: It is no longer I who live but it is Christ who lives in me (Gal.2.20).The vegetable world assimilates minerals and animals assimilate vegetables, and the spiritual assimilates the material. To those that receive Him Jesus says: “You shall not change into your own substance. Instead you shall be changed into me’. What is the logic behind this statement of Jesus? The logic is very clear. Eucharist is

being the body and blood of the risen Lord it is stronger or superior form of life. Therefore, it assimilates, elevates and transforms the weaker or human form of life.

The transformation of being, which is holistic, can be noticed in the doing of the believer. For, doing is an expression of being. What is done (the task done) may be one and the same. But, one can notice a change in the modality/quality of doing because there is a change in ones being. Consequently, one's thinking becomes more and more Christ like; one's desires become more and more Christ-centered. It is no more the fallen selfish ego that prevails everywhere. On the contrary, being more and more influenced by the gospel values and the life pattern of the New Adam, other-centeredness begins to prevail in one's life style. One finds more time for the other; one finds more energy to come to the rescue of the weak; one finds more resources to help the marginalized.

"Our wounds grow foul and fester, because of our foolishness' (ps.38:6). By wounds I refer to the brokenness in us, our anxieties, fear and all those psychological and mental blocks that obstruct the free and dynamic flow of love that comes from the trinity. Our foolishness lies in our forgetfulness that, "He (Jesus) himself bore our sins on the cross, so that, free from sin, we might

live for righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed". (1pet 2.24) The Eucharist is a moment of healing. We have a natural craze to go to self-professed healers when we suffer from an illness (mental or physical). We forget that Jesus can completely heal us and restore us, during the Eucharist. Just recall the words of Roman Centurion which we recite before reception of the Holy Communion, "Lord does not trouble you, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof. Therefore, I did not come"(Lk.7.6-7). Or take the example of the women with a hemorrhage (Mt.9-18-22). There were many people who were pressing against him in the crowd, but only this woman who approached him in faith was healed. But rather than focusing on physical healing I would turn my attention to sin which is our greatest weakness and illness. We touch the same Jesus in the Eucharist and we too can be healed, provided we believe. The catechism of the catholic church reminds us: "The Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ with out at the same time cleansing us from past sins and persevering us from the future sins".(no.1393). Therefore, St. Ambrose exhorts: "As his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins. I should always receive it so it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy". We don't use this remedy

sufficiently.

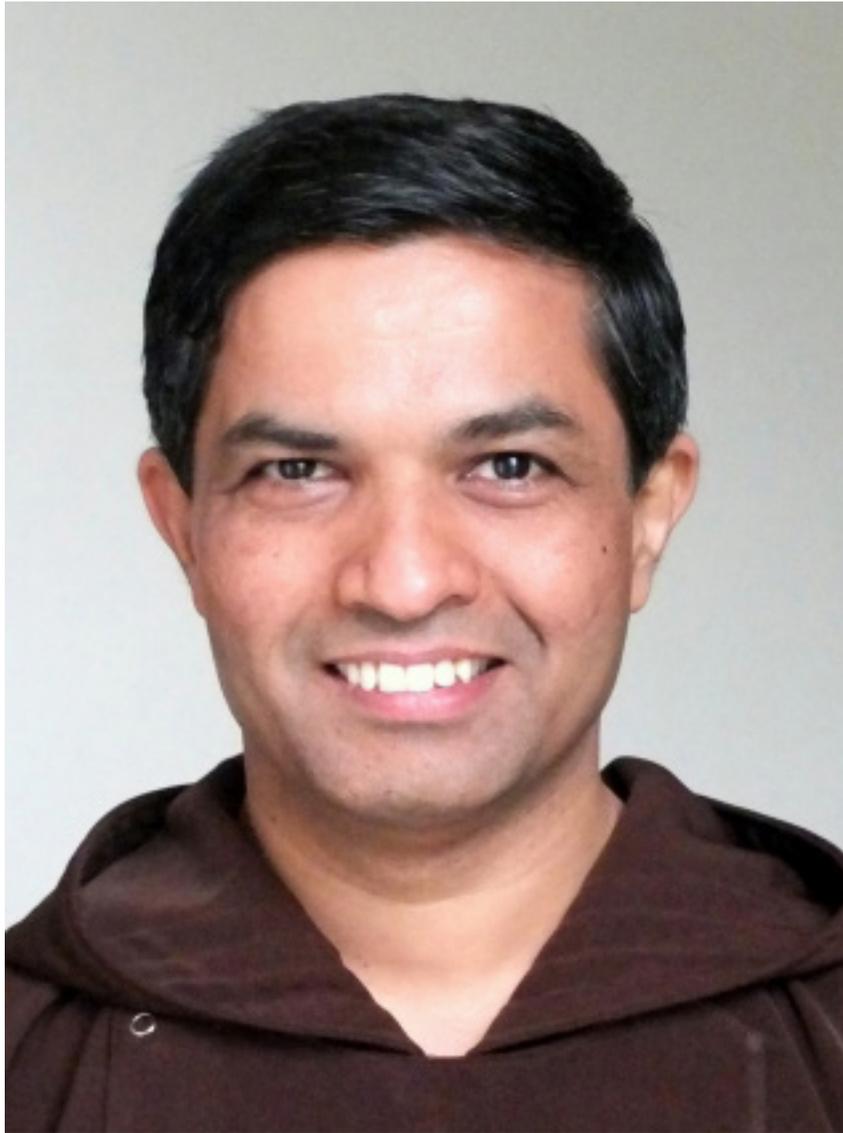
As the world faces this difficult time, we should approach the Holy Eucharist with Faith and Love that our Lord Jesus Christ will heal and help us to be courageous in the most difficult situation.





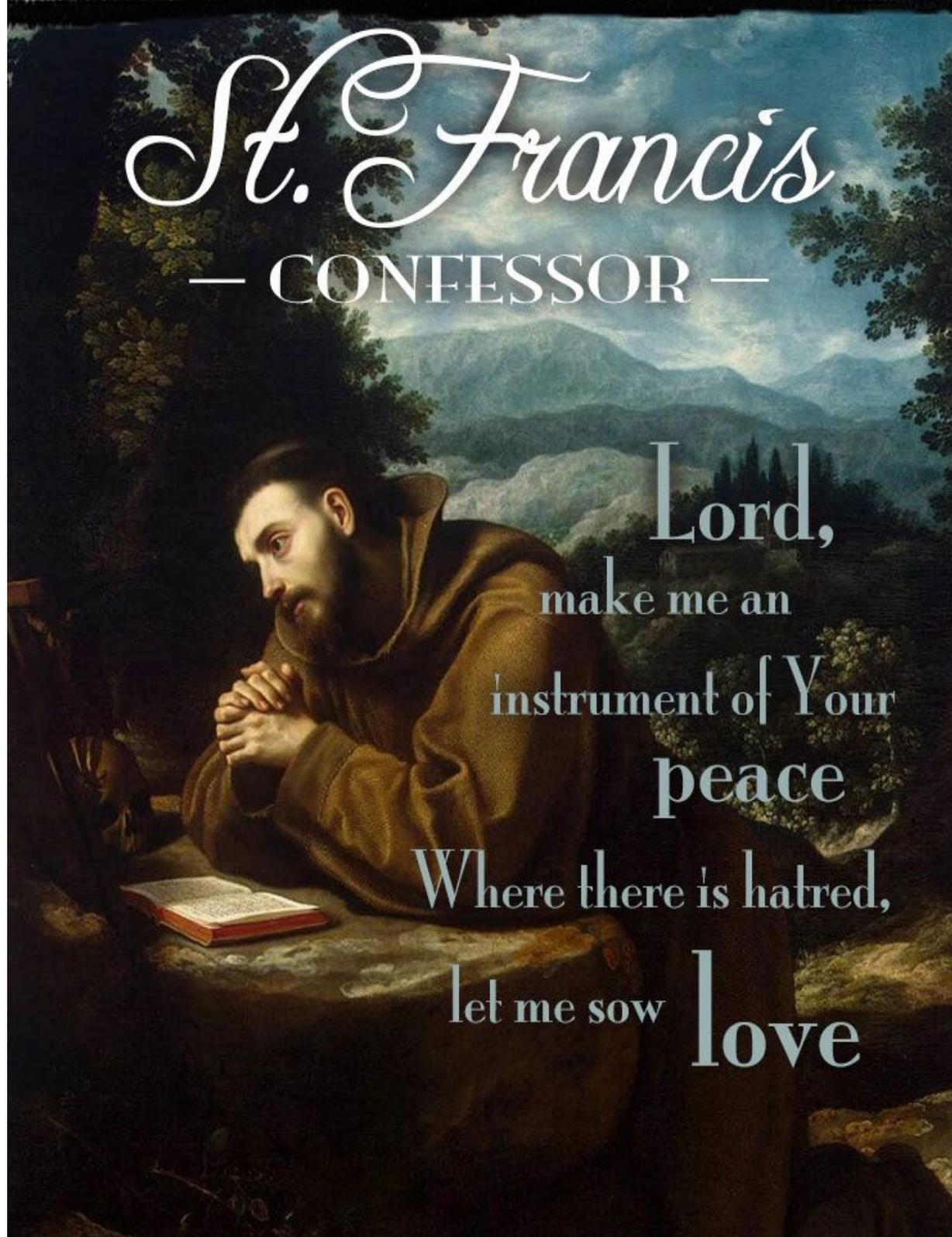
## New Provincial and Team

L to R: Brs. Brian Bandya, Benher Patil, Philip Gonsalves, Rajesh D'souza, Suhas Periera



*Congratulation*

Br. Albert D'souza OFM Cap.  
Being elected as General Procurator



*St. Francis*  
— CONFESSOR —

Lord,  
make me an  
instrument of Your  
peace  
Where there is hatred,  
let me sow love