

# INTERLINK

TEACHERS' TEAMS – INDIA

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

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## EDITORIAL

We are almost at the end of the Lenten season and are preparing for the Holy Week and Easter. As our newsletter, *Interlink* is released once in two months, we missed out on our Lenten reflections and messages which is normally there in the March issue. But, I am sure our parishes reminded and helped us to reflect, repent and return to the Lord.

Each one of us would have done a lot to get back, and all of us have so many ways to do so. This grace filled season is indeed a wonderful season of transformation for so many of us. But, The Lord says “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven” (Mt 6:1). I am always inspired by Pope Francis’ messages. It touches your heart and compels you to reflect.

In his message for Lent 2022, *Opus Dei*, (Work of God), he says “Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives. May the corporal fasting to which Lent calls us fortify our spirit for the battle of sin.” He also says, Lent is a favourable time for personal and community renewal, as it leads us to the Paschal Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For our Lenten journey in 2022, we will do well to reflect on Saint Paul’s exhortation to the Galatians: “Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap harvest, if

we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all” (Gal. 6: 9-10).

Pope Francis talks in detail about the following, and tells us about sowing goodness and reaping the harvest. Let us not grow tired of doing good. Let us not grow tired of praying. Let us not grow tired of asking for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Let us not grow tired of fighting against concupiscence. Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity towards our neighbors.

Pope Francis says, while it is true that we have our entire life to sow goodness, let us take special advantage of this Lenten season to care for those close to us and reach out to our brothers and sisters who lie wounded along the path of life. Lent is a favourable time to seek out, and not to avoid those in need; to reach out and not to ignore. Let us put into practice our call to do good to all, and take time to love.

If we do not give up, we shall reap the harvest. As we enter the Holy Week, let us be reminded of God’s sacrifice of his Son, and also God’s love for his people. May the wonders and the joy of this season fill our hearts with joy and life with love.

Jacinta Pereira  
National Coordinator

## LIFE OF THE TEAMS

### Andhra Pradesh

- A monthly meeting was held in Asserwadam master's house.
- A prayer meeting was conducted during the Lenten season in collaboration with the parish.
- We conducted Catechism classes for Catholic children.
- We celebrated Women's Day in collaboration with the Women's Commission in the Pastoral Centre of Visakhapatnam with the Archbishop Rev M. Prakash. Six TT members participated.
- We conducted the Way of the Cross for the Catechism children. About 234 children participated.
- We also visited the Sick. Five TT members took part in that visit.

These are the activities done by the Visakhapatnam region under the guidance of Asserwadam master and our Regional animator, S. Uday Kiran.

Usha Rani  
National Secretary

### Karnataka

- During the pandemic, the teachers connected mostly on virtual meets and kept in touch.
  - Helping one another by sharing their difficulties and fears.
  - Teachers were helping people in distress from wherever they were.
- During partial lockdowns and when there was an opportunity to meet, a few physical meetings were also conducted.
- Bangalore TT kept in touch with TT members of other regions by conducting zoom meetings and having prayers and rosaries.

- When the schools re-opened, it was possible to reach out to people in need, especially children who had lost their parents to the pandemic. Social work was the need of the hour.
- In the recent times, the teachers met to discuss various social issues.
  - The Hijab issue was one of them.
  - Teachers shared about what was happening in their own schools.
  - At one of the meetings the war in Ukraine was discussed and prayers were conducted. The upcoming Synod was discussed.
- Ms. Jacinta Pereira attended a seminar on the Synod organized by the Archdiocese of Bangalore.
- The following activities were conducted during the Lenten season.
  - On Fridays, children were taken for the Way of the Cross to the nearby church.
  - A short retreat for students and teachers was organized on 22/03/22 at Little Angels School.
  - Fr. Devadass conducted the same. It was a very fruitful and motivational recollection. There were 67 students and 4 TT members.
  - On 31/03/22 a recollection for teachers was organized. There were more than 70 teachers who attended.
  - Our national Coordinator, Mrs Jacinta Pereira, took the opportunity to speak about the TT and many were interested and collected the leaflets we had made about the history and the activities of the TT.

- Three teachers attended the inauguration of the *Holy Cross Family Institute* in Sakalavara and attended a seminar on “Indian Families and the Pandemic. Opportunities and Challenges.”

Rose Ravi  
Bangalore Regional Animator

### **Tamilnadu (Kottar)**

Team leaders of Kottar region have decided to conduct team meetings every month and have successfully done it for March with the common agenda, *the Synod*.

#### **Asaripallam:**

Date of meeting: 01.03.2022  
Venue: Residence of Rose Gnaalet  
Number of members participated: 6  
Speaker: Mr. Alexander (Team Leader)  
It was our pleasure to meet Mrs. Catherine, mother of Ms. Rose Gnaalet who was a very active member of Kottar region in yester years. She welcomed the members saying, “It’s God’s blessing to have the meeting in my house”. Mr. Alexander is appointed member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council by the Bishop.

#### **Ramanputhur:**

Date of meeting : 05.03.2022  
Venue: Parish church  
Number of members participated: 11  
Speaker: B. Deva Shanthini (Team Leader)

#### **Rajakamankalam:**

Date of meeting: 08.03.2022  
Venue: Residence of Mr. Beniston (Regional Animator)  
Number of members participated: 7  
Speaker: Mr. Xavier (Team Leader)  
Work is worship, so a workplace can be a church. As the Holy Father puts it, the Church is in synod. So, is our work place, class/school. Teaching is a twin journey with

our colleagues and our students of various cultural backgrounds. In every class there is difference of gender, colour, caste, religion, financial status, learning ability, and in other skills. There may be differently-abled students and transgenders (in colleges) also. We teachers are privileged professionals to promote synodality in a heterogeneous class/school.

Teaching is an inclusive ministry, caring for everyone in the class and building up a healthy relationship between the teacher and the taught. The aim of teaching is not to impart knowledge alone, but also to interweave healthy relationship with one another and to enlighten minds and hearts to promote unity.

So, teachers should sow the seeds of ethics incidentally and make students love one another with a single identity as human beings. God is one and the world is one. Today, man promotes religiosity which eats away spirituality and creates hatred among fellow beings.

Man’s love for materials fractures the world. The war between Russia and Ukraine is a live example in hand. Teaching becomes corrupted, if teachers do not teach the importance of love and unity, the only way to promote peace everywhere.

#### **Lenten reflection:**

On April 2nd TT, members of Kottar region gathered at Ramanputhur church from 3 to 5 pm for Lenten reflection. It was a group discussion on twelve types of sins, four types of prayers, need for repentance and reformation.

#### **Charity:**

- Offered provisions to 35 lepers’ families.
- Gifted two caroms to the convicts of the central jail, Thirunelveli.

Wishes to all for a blessed Easter from Kottar Region

Deva Shanthini

## **Pondicherry (Karaikal)**

This is a brief summary of works done by the members of the Karaikal Teachers' Team during the pandemic season.

1. Three members of the team rendered economic assistance to students and an orphanage.
2. Intense sessions in counselling were given to students and people who have lost livelihood activities during the pandemic.
3. Two orphanages, one in Kumbakonam and one in Karaikal were provided with groceries and other essential items, like mat, pillows and bed sheets.
4. Two members of the team took petition prayer and two other members offered Holy Mass and Rosary every Saturday for the

intentions of the people suffering due to Covid-19 and for world peace.

5. One member of the team visited hospitals often and another member visited sick people in their houses once in a week and helped them.
6. Financial assistance was given to a patient (student's father) for an operation related to his head injury.
7. Two members of the team undertook marriage preparatory classes for youngsters two times this year.
8. One member of the team assisted the parish priest of five parishes of our Vicariate and coordinated the works related to the world Bishops Synod.

Vincent George  
Regional animator

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

The official invitations to attend the next national seminar in Bangalore from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022, have been sent to the regional animators.

## **FROM SUZANNE CAHEN**

*Dear friends,*

*I wish each of you, your families and the Teachers' Teams of your continent a happy Easter. May this feast of the Resurrection teach us to look at all the actions that put children, women and me on their feet, that make them worthy, that welcome the stranger, that revive hope.*

*Of course, we pass through Good Friday, during which we look at Christ humiliated, tortured, murdered..., an image of all the atrocities of which we are more or less passive witnesses in this time of war, abuse of power, rejection, racism...*

*With the risen Christ, let us revive and rediscover our faith in peace and in the love of one another, in particular for the youngest and for the children in our care. I thank you for all the work you do throughout the year and in particular for feeding the Among Us bulletin and thus exchanging news from the various continents. I greet you fraternally.*

Suzanne  
President of Dialogue & Cooperation

## SYNODALITY IN THE TEACHERS' TEAMS

Recently, the Holy Father invited the whole Church to enter a process of synodality. We could ask ourselves: how can this be done in our Teams?

“Synodality” is a new word. It may sound strange to us. Yet the etymology of the word implies a type of assembly. The Greek word ‘*sun*’ means “with”, and ‘*odos*’ means “way.” So, the word “synod” refers to a people “walking together.” Pope Francis has made “synodality” the key word of his pontificate. He would like the entire Church to adopt a synodal way of carrying its mission. In other words, he would like the Church to be a people who walk or function together and not merely as individuals.

Usually, it is in times of urgency that new words emerge. Today, the greatest urgency is to work together, because everyone has a tendency to go his own individualistic way and sometimes in very different directions. We see this happening even in our Teams when, at the end of the year, we report our activities. Most of these activities, which are praise worthy in themselves, have been carried out by individuals.

Moreover, there are always some who feel that great leaders can show us the way, even if they often end up imposing their views on us. The Church is not protected against this temptation. So, the challenge we have to face today is to find our way together. And if the Church is invited to enter a process of synodality, it is not because it is more fashionable, but because God wants it that way.

### **Insights from the Acts of the Apostles**









So, what did Peter and the apostles do? They convoked an assembly to find a solution to that problem. They said to the assembly: “Select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom. We will hand over this duty to them. The whole assembly approved of this proposal.” (Acts 6: 3-5). They presented these men to the apostles who laid their hands on them.

This incident says something about synodality. The apostles did not solve the problem by themselves, but they fulfilled their role by getting the assembly involved. It is to say that, in the process of decision making, the responsibilities are shared. The leaders do not do everything, but they see to it that everything is done. Synodality implies that everyone believes in the distinctive role of the assembly who has a specific function to play. In other words, the apostles were not autonomous before the assembly.

There is another text in the Acts of the Apostles (chapter 15, verses 1 to 35) which speaks about synodality. There was a problem to be solved. Some people from Jerusalem said that the first Christians had to be circumcised, otherwise they could not be saved. So, what to do? The assembly was convoked again, because an important decision had to be made. Paul and Barnabas had a long discussion with these men. The assembly sent them both to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the apostles. In Jerusalem, both of them gave an account of what God has done through them, but some converted Pharisees insisted on circumcision. The apostles and the elders met to discuss the matter. Finally, the assembly was convoked again. Peter stood up and addressed them. Then James intervened. Delegates were chosen to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to deliver an apostolic letter to the Christians.

That is what the early Church did when important decisions had to be made. It is only after discussion and after invoking the Spirit that they made these decisions. In other words, they always asked the Spirit: “What should we do?” They sought God’s will. Fi-







