

Challenge

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BULLETIN OF THE WEST ZONE JESUIT PROVINCE

Migrants



Rights of Migrants

Migrants : Men for every
season

Pastoral care of migrants

Editor's Voice

People around the globe move and seek to rebuild their lives elsewhere. While some seek jobs and better prospects others are forced to flee to escape war, persecution, extreme poverty and the like. We call them, migrants, refugees, displaced and so on." Although their journeys start with hope, they are full of danger, fear and risk. They fall prey to human trafficking, detention, torture, exploitation and discrimination. Often, they work and live in the shadows, afraid even to complain. Labels such as migrants and refugees do not reflect their identity or personality. Like us, they too are unique human beings. We must protect every person's rights. We must ensure that such people have safe opportunities to rebuild their lives.

Migrant labour is both desirable and necessary to sustain economic growth. In Goa, many industrial units such as construction and fishing depend on

migrant labour. We must examine the problems they face and help alleviate them. Take a look at the human tragedy that is unfolding in Ukraine due to Russian aggression. The sheer numbers crossing international borders is overwhelming. These global crises are created by the short-sighted government policies of various countries. We are called to do whatever we can. Jesus came into this world for everyone, so we must be on the look out for opportunities to help others even if they are from a different state or country. This edition of CHALLENGE attempts to examine the issue of migrants. It emphasises the need to show care and concern for their rights. It also throws light on the work done by the JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) in serving displaced people.



Ms. Dorothea D'Costa

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Rights Of Migrants

What is migration ?

The very topic stirs up a flurry of thoughts on my mind - migration has been happening around the world from times immemorial. Even the birds and animals migrate in search of food and better ecological conditions to breed and raise their young ones. In simple terms it is the survival instinct of every living creature that triggers migration. Man is no exception to that. The Biblical exodus of

Who are migrants ?

In the modern times we have migrants in every class of people that is, the unskilled labourers from the villages who migrate into towns and cities in search of work to sustain themselves and feed hungry mouths in the family, the skilled hands or technological brains that migrate to foreign countries to earn more and better their future prospects and then there are

those who migrate illegally to escape war, persecution or famine and seek asylum in foreign lands. Whatever the reason for moving out of their native lands, migrants are nevertheless a separate class of people who might earn their



the Israelites from Egypt maybe the earliest recorded group of migrants in history.

livelihood and even settle down in the new environs but what would be their rights as migrants??!!

This is a huge question. Coming to think of it, there are just no ground rules laid down by countries or even within borders on the rights of the migrants. They carry the “outsider” tag even if they are indispensable to the place and situation they are in. A new citizenship can be gotten, proof of residence can be authenticated through various means but their rights as such, are not really worth a mention. Those working for companies may be part of a union which addresses their grievances but none of them have “rights” in the real sense.

What do the records reveal -

A quick scouring of relevant material available on the rights of migrants reveals that it's only the agencies working for the migrants' cause that are crying foul, raising the issue on various fora and doing their bit. The Catholic Church too, through its religious congregations and other organisations work in a big way towards this. Important among them is the Jesuit initiative

The Jesuit response

Jesuits worldwide do a lot of humanitarian work with the migrants - those who are forcibly displaced by war, persecution and other such factors. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) seeks to liaison with governmental and non-governmental machinery and work to alleviate the suffering of the migrants who are shunted out of their homes and are alien in the land

that they now reside in. Though there are many legislation put forth by governments, nothing is really in practice. Thus the JRS faces many hurdles in their work. In countries where Christians are a minority, they are sometimes seen as agents of proselytization. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church led by our Holy Father Pope Francis recognised the need to respond to the realities of the time and in June 2020, included an invocation into the Litany to our Lady - Solace of migrants. Such is the focus on inclusivity that the Holy Mother Church practices.



The Indian scenario

India is a typical case in point. There are migrants from neighbouring states and countries in recent times but they generally come in search of work and are not forced to be refugees like the victims of Partition, Bangladesh war or Sri Lankan Tamils trying to escape the civil war and fleeing from oppressive conditions.

Migrant rights in India

With particular reference to India, the Preamble of the Constitution prescribes

and promotes social justice for all kinds of workers and there are various legislations concerning migrant workers like the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act(1979), Equal Remuneration Act(1976), Minimum Wages Act(1948) and more recently, The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act(2008) But sadly a majority of the migrant workers live and work in pitiable conditions completely unaware of the violation of the basic human rights that they are entitled to.

The recent phenomenon - Indian migrant crisis

This became evident during the sudden countrywide lockdown imposed amidst the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. Though it adversely impacted the whole nation, the failure of the government machinery to safeguard the interests of the migrant workers triggered a humanitarian crisis. With their rights remaining eclipsed due to government apathy, they were rendered economically unproductive and thus, dumped without wages to sustain themselves. Scenes of thousands of migrant workers walking on foot to their hometowns and villages, some of them with families, caught global attention. The pictures of a sleeping child over a trolley-suitcase, a toddler sitting beside its dead mother on a railway platform, men and women walking with sore feet in the summer heat, children crying for food, migrants mowed down by a freight train- the list seems endless. Economist Jean

Dreze states that the lockdown had been “almost a death sentence” for this underprivileged section of the Indian society.

On the other hand, negative comparisons were made between the situation of domestic migrants and those of Indians



abroad. There were efforts made through the Vande Bharat Mission to bring back stranded Indians living and working abroad whereas the underprivileged workers were left to fend for themselves. Though attempts were made by the government machinery to treat the movement as a violation of the lockdown guidelines mandate, it was here again that the survival instinct came to the fore. The only thing that seemed to be on the minds of these hapless workers was just to return to their homes and loved ones.

What ails the system?

Sadly, even though there is a plethora of legislation on paper, there still seems a wide gap between the legal framework governing their rights and the ground reality of the basic human rights of the migrant labourers. Their conditions of living are pitiable to say the least. There is no sensitisation about the grievance redressal mechanism in place

because the labour contractors thrive only in such a situation.

Today, a year after the unprecedented migrant worker exodus, nothing has changed for this class of people. The lack of credible data on the workforce and poor implementation of labour regulations has failed to address the long-term systemic issues. It was only in April 2021 that the Indian government announced the launch of an all-India Survey of Migrant Workers seeking to look into the socio-economic conditions of migrant workers and assess the impact of Covid-19 on their lives. Sadly it has been paused with the ravaging second wave of the pandemic.

NGOs can involve themselves in highlighting their issues and seek to redress their grievances. The focus should just be on dignity of labour and a humane approach to this underprivileged class of people forced by poverty to take up employment outside their native lands.

Empathy on our part, who encounter these people, would go a long way in integrating them into the scheme of things and see that they lead a life of dignity. May our Blessed Mother who is invoked as the solace of migrants inspire us too to be agents of that solace and ignite in them - the spark of the hope of a better tomorrow.



What needs to be done?

The simplest thing to do would be to just put into practice what is all on paper with regard to the various legislations that already exist. This will go a long way in mitigating the situation and improving the living and working conditions of migrants. There should be more representation of the problems faced by the migrants on various forums so that

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Migrants: People for Every Season



Migration has been an ancient act of moving to new places for living. It has been evident that many people moved for centuries put together. The purpose of this migration was in search of fertile land, water, habitat, and identity. Migration slowed down for a while due to the development of humans in terms of civilization and settlement.

The migration of people continued until a sense of an established identity was given, in the formation of states and countries, which was finalized only in the 20th century.

The term *migration* seems to be a 20th-century terminology indicating the movement of people from one place to the other. The word 'emigration' would mean to leave one's residing place or country, whereas 'immigration' would mean to settle in a new place or country. Those who migrate from one place to the other, as mentioned above, are known as migrants.

In our context, migration has influenced demographical changes in states and countries. It has given a different

orientation toward human resource management and a sense of belonging and identity. It has given a different narrative towards life, in terms of living, education, economy, socio-cultural influence, and acceptance.

However, the word “migrants” – refers to those who have migrated and have come to a new land and have been looked at with contempt. This word has been used in derogatory usage to describe someone who does not belong here. And yet the irony is, to get menial works done, there is no hesitation from the locals to coerce the migrants to do odd jobs.

Migrants have been the backbone of any country's or state's economy. They have brought about a change in work ethics and dedication toward delivering the best they can offer. They have been instrumental in displaying a sense of commitment and confidence in what they do. It is because of their sheer hard work and passion for doing their job, that they have pushed the locals to the wall in waking up from their complacency and half-hearted dedication to any job.

The type of work the migrants in India, and especially in Goa is that of a blue-collar job.

Besides the job being blue-collar, many migrants are skilled artisans, carpenters, household and electrical-based jobs, and the list can continue. Most of the migrants are men, followed by women, according to the census.

Speaking in terms of their livelihood, they begin their day before the sun rises, to the extent that they finish their day of work by late evening. Most of the men are employed to do hard physical labor whereas women



are employed in-home services and odd jobs at construction sites and public works. These migrants are into these jobs so that they can sustain better livelihood and better standards of living for their children and future generations to come.

Migrants have been able to create a niche for themselves, in terms of availability for work and their promptness in delivering what they are given to do. Speaking of

availability, migrants today may have basic communication through mobile phones. It makes it very easy to avail themselves of the task given. One phone call and their willingness to do one's work is unquestionable.



Migrants are great multi-taskers. They will never say no to a job, unless it is beyond their control. They are willing to learn any job given. This has paid quick dividends to the migrants. If you see in the employment sector, most of the jobs taken up are by the migrants, for the very fact of their quick learning and adaptability. The salary or wages they receive is another topic altogether. Nevertheless, they are people for all seasons and all types of work given to them.

We are certain that the migrants are people for all seasons, but they have gone through abuse, rejection, mistrust, and in terms of employment, underpaid. The

owners or locals who employ them have systematically made life difficult for the migrants. The first excuse of the natives is that the politicians have hired these migrants as vote banks. The second excuse is that they have taken all the jobs reserved for

the locals are given to the migrants. All these factors add to the abuse of migrants. One of the more common excuses labeled against migrants is that they are thieves, murderers, uncouth, uncultured, and so forth. But the hypocrisy of the locals

comes into play, especially in getting their work done, they need migrants.

One must remember that our ancestors were once migrants who came and settled in various places. We must give migrants their due credit, respect, love, and acceptance for their positive influence on work dynamics and unassuming character. Without them, it is like cutting the essential organs of one's body. Thus, migrants are people of all seasons, for the very reason of dedication, commitment, and execution of their work.

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Pastoral Care of Migrants

The COVID-19 outbreak put the whole world in an unprecedented crisis and lingering uncertainty with innumerable deaths, economic depression, unemployment, unavoidable lockdown, and travel-ban that was imposed globally as a necessity to contain the spread of the deadly virus. The plight of the migrants, the most vulnerable group among the populace surfaced within a few days after the Indian Prime Minister's demonetization type sudden announcement of the lockdown, oblivious of the ground realities in India, as the very livelihood of the migrants came to a complete standstill. They felt the pressing need to head back home to safety despite the acute financial crisis and the travel bans. The enormous hurdles generated due to the novel virus which the people had never faced before or had no idea how to overcome further created overwhelming fear and mounting anxiety among the migrants due to the uncertainty it brought with it. Though all people were adversely affected, regardless of their social status, the most vulnerable ones were seen on their feet heading towards their distant homes, hundreds of miles away. The State machinery woke up quite late

with a very little respite to the suffering and distressed migrants. The NGOs and the civil society groups mobilized goods and reached out to them amidst innumerable hurdles. It has been two years now and the pandemic is far from over. The migrants and the poor continue to be at the receiving end.

It brings us to a serious relook at our systems and mechanisms that deal with the issues of pandemics via-a-vis the national migration policy, with an emphasis on the need to establish a strong ethical alliance between the local population, health systems, local government mechanisms, and human rights associations. In order to alleviate the suffering of migrants it is necessary to investigate, understand, and analyse the hardships they have been undergoing to foster greater awareness among the public and to introduce new measures that can be adopted to safeguard the rights of the migrants.

The bulk of the migrants fall in the unorganised sector and a large majority of them are daily wage earners who have low-income and poor living conditions that are dilapidated, unhygienic and scarce of basic amenities. Most of the migrants are slum-dwellers with inadequate sanitation facilities. There is

no access to the health care services. The work places make them susceptible to multiple physical and mental health problems. There are no government machinery, department or other direct administering body to address the grievances of these migrant workers;



neither do they have any rights or privileges in the regions in which they work. A major social issue among the migrants is the fear of losing their jobs, income and housing.

In Goa the so called outsiders (migrants) are contemptuously referred to as 'ghantis'. They are mostly the labour force from different States of the country. They constitute the under paid industrial workers, fruit sellers, vegetable vendors, domestic workers, sanitation workers, construction workers and others involved with some menial occupations and running errands. These are people who are otherwise poor and are in Goa to make their ends meet. Unfortunately, the poor migrants are highly discriminated

against and often looked down upon as eyesoars. Though not recognised by society or institutions, the migrants play a vital role in the life of the locals by working in their fields, running errands, cleaning the houses and toiling at their construction sites.

A cursory glance will help us find out that the migrants are playing a major role in the development of the State and the nation building and yet they are invisible for the majority of us.

There is an immediate need to push for a pro-migrant attitude in the general society,

a better acknowledgement of the contribution of the migrants to the society, and the adoption of a proactive role in educating them and safeguarding their labour rights. Rather than treat them as outsiders or outcasts and a threat or nuisance, they need to be recognised and treated with love, respect and compassion. Restoring their sense of worth and dignity is a vital human and spiritual task to engage them in their process of emancipation. In his message for the 105th world day of migrants and refugees on 29th September 2019, Pope Francis calls for a major shift from a culture of exclusion, indifference, intolerance and marginalisation to a culture of concern, compassion, listening and inclusion. He



advocates four significant practices of welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating not just migrants and refugees but all disadvantaged persons in order to build a just society and promote the integral development of all persons. Responding to this call the Jesuit Conference of South Asia keeping with one of its four Universal Apostolic Preferences, - 'to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice', has initiated Migrant Assistance and Information Network (MAIN) along with the collaborators and potential partners in reaching out

through the mapping of major locations where migrants work or reside. The work of reducing the vulnerabilities of the migrants post Covid19 scenario and going beyond the relief and rehabilitation to empowering the migrants with skill and leadership by linking them to resources and agencies is underway. It's an attempt to move from a dehumanising consumer culture to the Ignatian Magis of loving and doing more for God and His people.

MAIN
**MIGRANT ASSISTANCE AND
INFORMATION NETWORK**
Accompanying Distress Migrants

Fr. Simon Fernandes SJ
is the Director of
SWADES, a Social Unit
of the Goa Jesuits



Journey of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) in Afghanistan



The Journey of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) in Afghanistan

The Jesuit Refugee service (JRS) is one of the flagship initiatives of the Society of Jesus. Fr. Arrupe's experience in Hiroshima, while ministering to the suffering and the oppressed after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, brought about a personal transformation in his life. In 1979, Fr. Arrupe as the Superior General of the Society of Jesus was moved when he saw the flood of refugees floundering out of Vietnam in rickety boats and rafts. The plight of the Vietnamese code

named as “*boat people*” led Fr. Arrupe to call for a worldwide humanitarian response by the Jesuit order and its lay partners. Out of that campaign was born on 14th November 1980, the founding of Jesuit Refugee Service.

I had the unique opportunity to be part of this shared mission and thereby work with JRS and Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) in Afghanistan. While I was pursuing my Philosophy studies in Chennai, in 2005, the thought of JRS first crossed my mind. It in that same year, JRS had launched its educational programs in Herat, Afghanistan. Since then, many Jesuits and lay volunteers have served with JRS in various capacities and in different provinces of Afghanistan. As

a young Jesuit after my Ordination, I was looking for a '**Challenge**' and the thought of volunteering for Afghanistan revisited me.



Being in Afghanistan, the last seven years have been a time of grace and opportunities. As a frontier mission of the Society of Jesus, it has been at times very challenging yet at the same time very fulfilling. Our presence in Afghanistan is a concrete expression of our faith in God who identifies with the poor and the marginalized. It has been very encouraging to see many young Afghans, particularly girls seeking to participate in the educational programs run by JWL.

Over the years, the JRS-JWL educational programs have grown significantly. In the early years, JRS volunteers were largely involved in teaching at the Universities in Kabul, Herat and Bamiyan. Since there were no qualified teachers, the Jesuits took the 'Challenge' to be the "School Masters" at the universities. This direct contact with the students and educational

institutions eventually helped in establishing several learning centers in Afghanistan which are now co-ordinated by JRS-JWL graduates.

Since mid August 2021, JRS has temporarily suspended its operations in Afghanistan; however JWL continues its educational programs with the help of the Students Organized Learning Centers (SOLCs) called New Horizon.

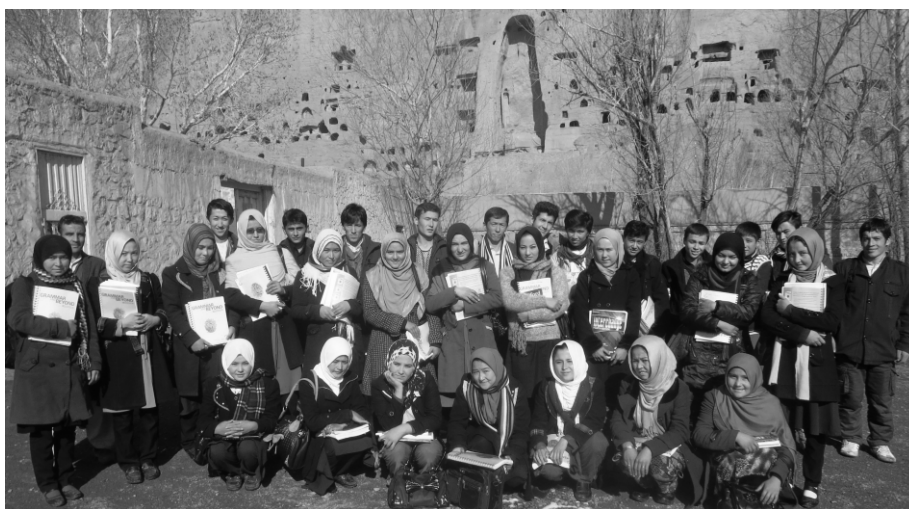
The Diploma in Liberal Studies in collaboration with the Regis University-Denver Colorado has been a pioneering higher education initiative of JWL. In 2013, in collaboration with Jesuit World Wide Learning

(JWL), JRS launched its first higher education learning center in Herat. The Global English Language Program and the various professional and academic programs offered in collaboration with Jesuit universities worldwide provide access to higher education to those living on the margins of the society. The programs provide students with a global exposure, as Ferishta states, "Studying on the online Diploma is a unique experience; it not only helps me to improve my understanding of the subject matter, but I get connected with students at other refugee centers across the world."

In 2015, the second higher education site was started in Bamiyan, located in the central highlands of Afghanistan. Most of the people living in this region are Hazaras, an ethnic minority in Afghanistan. In preparation, a group of students from Daikundi and Bamiyan were trained in

English. In 2018 the first batch of Diploma students graduated from the Diploma program.

The New Horizon, a local NGO registered with the Ministry of Economy in Kabul is an initiative of the first Diploma graduates who are engaged in running the JWL centers in the remote regions of Daikundi and Ghor Provinces. The graduates both boys and girls are now involved in coordinating centers in some remote regions of Afghanistan.



The students remarked that their studies helped them to improve their thinking and communication skills. It enables them to come in contact with students from different cultures, religions, and grow in mutual respect and understanding.

The events which unfolded in mid August-2022 leading to the sudden collapse of the democratically appointed Afghan government left everyone in a state of shock. No one ever imagined that the switching of power to Islamic Emirates Afghanistan (IEA) would be

that quick. Many dreaded the thought of the upsurge of IEA and memories of late 1990s of Taliban regime began to resurface.

What followed was the immediate closure of all the educational Institutions in Afghanistan and the suspension of the activities of local and International Organisation. Amidst this turmoil, the New Horizon(NH), within one month, rose to the '**Challenge**' by reopening its learning centres, with the support of the local community and the district administration.

One of the parent's remarked, "I value education and I believe that the JWL onsite-online courses are the only opportunity for our children to study in these remote regions of Afghanistan." The blended learning model

of JWL provided an opportunity for the students to study from home using their mobile phones, tablets, and laptops. The students though under the radar of *Taliban* would visit the learning centres to submit their assignments and download the contents for learning.

Towards the end of October, four JRS learning centres were handed over to the New Horizon. The uncertainties and increasing **Challenges** only provided an opportunity for the JWL to scale-up the programs in the remote regions of Afghanistan. True to the vision of Fr. Pedro

Arrupe and the Jesuit charism, it is only through collaboration with the local community and by enhancing the capacities of the students' organisation that the JWL is able to sustain its educational programs in Afghanistan.

Presently there are 2800 students studying in the various educational programs run by JWL and New Horizon. A large number of students, namely, 472 boys and 889 girls are enrolled in Global English Language Program; while 44 students are studying various Professional courses which includes- Peace Leaders, Creative Writing & Design, Learning Facilitators and E-Commerce. Thirty-five students are pursuing academic program run in collaboration with Xavier University, in Bhubaneswar - Orissa.

JWL educational programs have a unique attraction. True to its mission, JWL closely accompanies the students and inculcates in the students and teachers the core values of service and compassion. Students trained by JWL shoulder the '*Challenge*' of training other students on a program called *Each One Teach Some* (EOTS). Well motivated female students who have successfully completed JWL Global English Language Program are engaged in teaching English to other female school-students in their own schools and communities. There are altogether 1360 students, who are studying on the EOTS program, of which 65% of the students are females. They feel it is their responsibility to give back to the community what they have learnt from JWL.

While most of the high schools for girls

have remained closed for more than a year, the 10 NH-JWL centers provide an opportunity for girls to study as 64 % of the total 2800 students are females. The JWL learning centers provide safe spaces for girls to study and improve their competencies. One of the students, Basgul remarked, "Studying at NH-JWL has opened my thinking. JWL provides many opportunities, especially for girls to improve their English and learn different life-skills."

Over the years, JWL learning centers have grown to be centers of excellence in education. The creative educational programs truly reflect the JWL Global Education Initiative in reaching out to the vulnerable sections of the society and forming future community leaders. It is indeed transforming the thinking of the students and giving them hope to fashion a better future for themselves and their community.



Fr. Orville De Silva SJ
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What do you like the best of the Society of Jesus/ Jesuits:

Reedom to grow - Gives you opportunities to excel.

Bondness of the Jesuits various.

Short description of your Vocation to the Society of Jesus:

Was Educated in a Jesuit school, was mainly in touch & inspired by the Jesuits.

Attended one/two Jesuit camps organized by the Fr. Ronny D'Souza SJ.



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-Go Make a Difference-

The Goa Jesuits invite you to walk
in the legacy of St. Francis Xavier.

Come, be a close Follower of Jesus.



Contact
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St. Francis Xavier
was the First Jesuit
Missionary to India.

Come; let us pray with the Pope!



INTRODUCTION

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (PWP/ Apostleship of Prayer) is an ecclesial service of the Holy See entrusted to the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). Its Mission is to mobilize Christians through prayer and action for the challenges of humanity and of the mission of the Church. These challenges are discerned by the Pope, and are expressed under the form of Prayer Intentions (see below) which he entrusts to the entire Church. PWP has as its foundation the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a spirituality for mission. It is present in 98 countries in the world with 35 million Catholics. This year the PWP celebrates 175 years of its foundation.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS

Note: Kindly whisper a small prayer when you read each of the Intentions below.

APRIL

Health care workers

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

MAY

Faith-Filled Young People

We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary's life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service.

JUNE

Families

We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives

Join the Pope's Prayer Group:

www.clicktopray.org

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Apr. - Jun . 2022 | Challenge

Snanika Arulappara Virakta Math

Desnur is a remote village in Bailhongal taluka of Belgavi district in Karnataka . It has a population of 11,000. In this village, most of the people are famers while few run shops. It is a backward village in the Belgavi District since the people are poor and most of them are uneducated. Some children of the village do not go to school but help their parents in the fields on account of their poverty.

Our main work here is evangelization and healing services with the Lingayat along with other works. Presently we run a boys hostel, schools (Kannada medium), dispensary, tailoring classes and youth work. Our church (S.A.V.Math) 'St. John the Baptist Church' is built in an Indian style, like a Hindu Temple. People of all faiths visit our Temple.

I earnestly request you to help our mission (Kannada Mission). You are most welcome to visit our Deshur math.

Fr. Menino Gonsalves SJ



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