

VAIHARAI

(The Dawn)

A Theological Half-Yearly

Vol. 24, No.1

Jan-Jun 2018

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The main scope of VAIHARAI published by THEDAL VELIYEEDUGAL is to foster reflection on theological issues in India and elsewhere in the light of the Christian faith and other religious traditions. The opinions expressed in the Journal are those of the author and not necessarily those of the editorial board or of the publisher.

VAIHARAI

From Editor's Desk

One of the crucial challenges faced today not only in India, but in the whole world is the aggressively and vehemently spreading of COVID19, a highly dangerous and contagious virus which has killed a large number of people in all the countries and left the life of innumerable miserable and melancholic. What is really sad is the fact that all the places of worship have been closed on the order of the Government and, as a result, the church has become helpless to render its pastoral care and support to the affected and dying people.

The country's Christians make up just 2.3 percent of the population, but the Catholic Church in India has pledged to offer food, shelter, clothing and medical care to the most vulnerable during this crisis. It is doing what it can to provide relief for millions of poor people affected by the lockdown imposed by the government to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Many parishes have voluntarily come forward to distribute food packets to the migrant workers who have been stranded on the roads due to the sudden announcement of lockdown. This act of charity manifests the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. The Vaiharai conveys its sympathy towards the affected and homage to the deceased. The current issue of Vaiharai carries five articles on different themes. However, all are interlinked as they are pastoral oriented.

Bro. Savariraj, in his article "Theologico – Pastoral Understanding of Youth Ministry" succinctly brings out the theology of youth ministry in the light of *Christus Vivit* and recommends innovative ways of doing effective

youth ministry in India. He lists out some of the key theological implications of youth ministry from *Christus Vivit*. The glory of youth is in the heart than physical experience; the young hearts are basically ready to change; young people alone can keep the church young. The author points out that Jesus is the model for youth and also model for youth minister. Finally, he proposes a few suggestions and creative plans for youth ministry where he emphasizes youth ministry as a process 'For' the youth, 'With' the youth 'To' the youth and 'By' the youth. Also based on the foundations of *Christus Vivit* he proposes the creative pastoral plan of walking with the youth, welcoming the youth and making the youth as active agents.

Fr. Arockiasamy clearly explains in his article "The Ecclesial Vision of Pope Francis: Relevance to the Church in India" develops the challenges face by the Catholic Church in India under social, economic, religious, ecclesial and political realities. He brings to light that the social problem is a condition undesirable for some people in the society. The economic liberalization, free markets and globalization were the new factors for widening the split between the rich and the poor. Also, at the risk of the fascist forces the life of innocent civilians and the fundamental rights have been attacked in India. The author while revealing the relevance of the vision of Pope Francis in the Indian context points out the image of the Church as the people of God which is not just an idea, but a pastoral style of ministry. He proposes the ecclesial vision of Pope Francis that it would be a Church that has made a definite option for the poor and ready to translate this option into action in every sector of the life and mission. Also, the author highlights the importance of Synodal Church in which the bishops and faithful people walk together and authority is understood as service.

Fr. Justin in his article on the theme of "Inclusiveness of Jesus: An Antitode to Hindutiva Exlusivism, deals with the urgent need to protect and

safeguard India from the Hindutva wave. His article sheds light on how exclusive is Hindutva, how inclusive was Jesus and the Christian response to Hindutva in light of inclusiveness of Jesus. The author examines that Hindutva adopts the Hindu religion not as a way of seeking the divine but as a badge of worldly political identify. Hindutva wants to exclude secularism from our constitution and aims India to be identified with one culture, one religion and one law. According to him, to address this issue of exclusion by Hindutva, Jesus is the best model because Jesus was born amidst exclusions and encountered them with his inclusive attitude. He did not limit himself to any specific ethnic or religious group. He was inclusive and a prophet of counter-culture. Responding to such situation is a prophetic call to reset the goal of Christian unity from being defensive to liberation. Christians need to come together not only to protect their minority rights but also for the rights of those who are excluded in the society. Inclusive life of Christians should be like leaven which makes whole dough leavened, transforming the walls of exclusions into the bridges.

Fr. Peter in his article clearly elucidates the models of priesthood in the light of *Evangelii Gaudium*. He says that a priest as a “Christo-centric Servant Leader” could guide the Church and the world in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and discerns what is right in union with Christ. A priest, as a Christo-centric servant leader follows the bottom- to- top approach at the service of others. Another image of Pope Francis is “Shepherds Living with the Smell of the Sheep”. Here the author points out that a priest as a shepherd accompanies and assures the sheep of care, love, mercy and compassion. All these characteristics make a shepherd good shepherd living with a smell of the sheep. A ‘Prophet-priest Model’ includes Pope Francis’ vision of priest as the minister of word, a spirit filled evangelizer and a man of social consciousness and he becomes the voice of the victim. Finally, priest is not

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simply a missionary or a disciple but a "Missionary Disciple". It is the ministry of all the missionary disciples to work in harmony with indigenous Christians so as to ensure that the faith and the life of the Church be expressed in legitimate forms appropriate for each culture.

Dr A. Albert

Editor