



God's Love
enculturated in humanity



Province of St. Francis Xavier
India Centre

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Epiphany

Of the *Lord*



Manifestation of Jesus Christ
to the world

Contents

- **Incarnate Love: Reflections on God's love embodied in Jesus Christ**
 - **Incarnating Love: A Mission at Kushta Nivaran Davakhana**
- **Cultural Expressions: Celebrating Christmas in various cultures**
 - **Omni in one Tent- OMNI = ALL**
- **Humanity United: Stories of love, kindness, and compassion**
 - **Christmas at Dayanand Hospital**
 - **Joyful Tidings of Christmas: Sharing the Gift of Jesus with All people of God**
- **Faith in Action: Inspiring testimonies of serving others**
 - **Adoring the Child Jesus, proclaiming the hope of heaven**
 - **"Spreading Christmas Cheer to the Homebound"**
- **Season of Hope: Messages of encouragement and renewal**
 - **Kintsugi**
 - **Sacred Sandals**
 - **Journey to Bethlehem: Encountering the Messiah**

➤ **Off the Beaten Path – Knowing Magdalene**

- **The cross of Christ on my shoulder**
- **For me to live is Christ**
- **God alone and Christ Crucified**
- **In solitude and silence**
- **Thirst on “The Mount of lovers”**
- **An amazing growth in charity**
- **‘A Heart Overflowing With Love’ -
Magdalene the Friend**
- **The primacy of God’s will**
- **Canossa Blooms**
- **St. Magdalene of Canossa - Guided by the
Word of God**
- **Building a culture of heart**



Editor's Note



God's Love Encultured in Humanity

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, we are reminded of the profound impact of God's love on humanity. The Christmas story is a testament to the power of divine love, which transcends cultural, social, and economic boundaries.

The Universality of God's Love

God's love is not limited to a specific culture, race, or creed. It is a universal force that resonates deep within every human heart. As the Bible says, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This verse underscores the all-encompassing nature of God's love, which knows no borders or boundaries. It is a love that seeks to unite humanity, rather than divide it.

Incarnating God's Love

The birth of Jesus Christ is a powerful reminder of God's love incarnate. As the Son of God, Jesus embodied the very essence of divine love, demonstrating its transformative power through his teachings, miracles, and sacrifice. Through Jesus, we see that God's love is not just a feeling or an emotion, but a lived reality that seeks to uplift, redeem, and restore humanity. As the apostle John wrote, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Cultivating God's Love in Our Lives

As we reflect on the significance of Christmas, we are invited to cultivate God's love in our lives. This involves embracing the values of compassion, kindness, and generosity that Jesus embodied.

We can start by loving our neighbors as ourselves, forgiving those who have wronged us, and showing kindness to those in need. As we do so, we become instruments of God's love, spreading joy, hope, and redemption to those around us.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, let us remember that God's love is a universal force that seeks to unite humanity. May we embody this love in our lives, cultivating compassion, kindness, and generosity towards all people. As we do so, we become part of a larger narrative of love, hope, and redemption that transforms lives and communities.

From Spandan Team



A Leader's Perspective



Cultured with hate, violence and greed,
Into this world you come with PEACE
Incarnated, inculturated you radiate grace
To all, irrespective of face!

God high up above yet down to earth
To lift us up, right from our dirt.
In His great love, he mingles with all
Inculturated with us making us tall.

He takes on flesh and mortal form like ours
Sharing human culture in all its forms
From Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's hill
He walks among us, with a resolute will

Jesus, the Incarnation of Peace and Love
Mirroring God's heart as sent from above
In Him, we find solace, comfort, and rest
Hid from life's storms within His sacred breast

Now, as we approach the Great Jubilee's gate
2025's Holy Door, a threshold to create
A year of forgiveness, jubilation and love
A time of grace, granted us from above

This Jubilee, may we Pilgrims find our way
Back to the heart of God, in love to stay
May Jesus, the Incarnation of Peace and Love
Lead us, guide us and inspire us, from above

Entering Heaven's gate, may our hearts be renewed
May God's mercy and love, our souls imbue
And may we carry, the light of this Jubilee year
Into our lives, our world, and all our endeavors dear.

Jesus Emmanuel, our inculturated God is with us!

Sr. Audrey D'souza
Province Leader.



Incarnate Love: Reflections on God's love embodied in Jesus Christ



Incarnating Love: A Mission at Kushta Nivaran Davakhana

Kushta Nivaran Davakhana, a leprosy hospital nestled in Talasari, Palghar District, is more than just a healthcare facility. It's a beacon of hope, a place where love is incarnated. Here, patients suffering from leprosy are treated with utmost compassion, dignity, and respect.

The dedicated Canossian sisters and the dynamic staff at Kushta Nivaran Davakhana go beyond medical care. They provide holistic support, addressing not only physical ailments but also emotional and psychological needs. By offering shelter, nutritious meals, and essential medical treatments, they empower patients to regain their self-worth and rebuild their lives.



A Multifaceted Approach to Healing

* **Physical Care:** Patients receive personalized attention, including specialized ulcer care, physiotherapy, and regular medical check-ups.

* **Emotional Support:** One-to-one counseling sessions provide a safe space for patients to share their concerns and experiences.

* **Social Reintegration:** The hospital facilitates connections with families and communities, helping patients overcome stigma and reintegrate into society.

* **Skill Development:** Various courses and training programs empower patients to become self-sufficient and find meaningful employment.



Out reach programmes:

Kushta Nivaran Davakhana's three mobile centers actively seek out patients in remote areas, providing early detection, treatment, and counseling. Regular surveys in hotspot areas help identify and address the needs of vulnerable populations. Moreover, the

hospital distributes specialized footwear to patients with foot ulcers, further enhancing their quality of life.

A Legacy of Love and Service

As a reference center for Palghar, Nashik, and Jawar districts, Kushta Nivaran Davakhana plays a crucial role in treating complex cases of leprosy. It offers specialized care for patients with ulcers and reactions, as well as physiotherapy services.

Beyond medical expertise, the hospital's true strength lies in its compassionate approach. By embodying love and service, the staff at Kushta Nivaran Davakhana inspires hope and transforms lives. They remind us that the true essence of healing lies in the human touch, the empathetic ear, and the unwavering commitment to the well-being of others.

Kushta Nivaran Davakhana is a place where LOVE is not just a word, but a reality. By being with these patients, we too rebuild and regain our happiness and joy. We feel so privileged to serve them and to take care of them.

We thank the Almighty for using us to “INCARNATE HIS LOVE” through the many opportunities to bring healing and new life to these less fortunate people.

Sisters of Talasari



Cultural Expressions: Celebrating Christmas in various cultures



Omni in one Tent - OMNI = ALL



God who is the creator of the universe and all that exists in it, is “ALL POWERFUL, ALL KNOWING AND EVERYWHERE PRESENT”.

Emmanuel means ‘God with us’. God wants to be intimately involved in our lives.

He wants us to be with Him in ‘Our Tent’ to know His voice and follow Him. From all eternity, God *wanted to be with us so strongly that He sent His son, a part of Himself, to physically walk on the earth.*



God expressed the wonder of the incarnation by becoming flesh and made His dwelling among us.

Keeping in mind “Interculturality as the Spiritual Horizon in the process of reconfiguration” we the sisters of Mangalwad take every opportunity to adapt to the different culture of languages, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, techniques, works of art, rites and rituals and capture moments of spreading God’s Kingdom under one banner of God.



We have involved friends and members of different faiths – parents of our play school, tuition children and catechism children and fostered the spirit of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and understanding. We have depicted CHRIST in our local culture and people from all walks of life

coming to Adore Him as Hindus, Muslims and Christians in their own traditional costumes.

The live crib had a deep impact on the audience. All the neighbouring children of other faiths who are not with us also came in large numbers. The parents of the tiny tots were very much impressed by their lovely performances.

The encouragement, cooperation, collaboration and coordination of the parish priest and the sisters, inspire and motivate the children, the youth and the parishioners to express the spirit of Christmas in love and generosity as they come together with their family and friends to celebrate, exchange gifts and spread kindness, forgiveness and cheer by:

a) Spending time with their loved ones and making happy memories.

b) Showing empathy, understanding and goodwill towards all.

Right from our Advent journey we strove

to build up Unity in Diversity and integrate faith in all that is carried out in our mission.

***We wish all of you a
spirit filled Happy Christmas
and a Grace filled New Year
2025***

Sisters of Mangalwad



Humanity United: Stories of love, kindness,
and compassion



Christmas at Dayanand Hospital

To seek him don't trouble
To Bethlehem to go.
In silence you'll find him
In the poor at Dayanand hospital

'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'
It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
There are the Marys who are waiting at OPD
Waiting expectantly for the new born
Jesus personified, yet to be born. Let us sing

'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'



It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
Marys are in agony, in labour pain in the labour room
Just when it seemed they were under a curse
The Lord came to visit disguised as a nurse!
The touch of her hand and the smile on her face
Gave hope in the night, like a channel of grace.

It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'

Caesarean is pronounced

And dark thoughts and hopelessness
filled them with dread, Nurses, like
angels of light Brought faith and
brought courage to get through the
night



It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'



The baby is born (JESUS) bringing Hope to the Hopeless
When life is a lark and the skies are all blue
The role of a nurse has no meaning.
One may even question why those who are sane
Would choose a career that has nothing to gain?

It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'

Bed pans and vomit, foul smells in
the air,
Contagious diseases that lurk
everywhere.
And when they are tending to
someone whose bleeding
Their beeper goes off for another
whose needing
Their expert attention; unless they
are fast
The down-the-hall patient surely
won't last.



It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'

Paralysis, nausea, pains in the head.
It seemed one had been given a difficult cup,
And sometimes one felt like just giving up.
But just when it seemed things could not be worse,
The door would swing open and in walked a nurse!



It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'



Whatever the issue, whatever the need,
She'd gracefully smile and accomplish the deed.
Thank God for nurses who answered the call,
To meet needs of others no matter how small.
This song is intended to honor and praise,
The ones who serve others for all of their days.

It's CHRISTMAS at Dayanand Hospital
'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO'
'PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH'



Sr. Theresa Joseph
Kalarickal
Talasari



Joyful Tidings of Christmas: Sharing the Gift of Jesus with All people of God

As we celebrate the joyful season of Christmas, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the work we have been able to accomplish together in our Anadasadan community. We take this opportunity to reflect on the gift of Jesus and how we are sharing His love with the beautiful people through various initiatives. This year, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we are reminded of the impact we can make by embodying the spirit of giving. God's incarnated love in Jesus offers us a profound model for living. By adopting His principles in our daily lives—through kindness, empathy, forgiveness, and service—we can not only experience His love more fully but also share it with the world around us. In doing so, we contribute to a society that mirrors the very heart of Christ—a society defined by love, understanding, and connection. Each day presents an opportunity to reflect and embody this divine love, reminding us that Jesus is not just a figure of the past but a living presence in our lives, encouraging us to radiate His love in everything we do.

Daily Dispensary: Healing Through Love

In our daily dispensary, we extend the love of Jesus to the Adivasi people by providing not just medical care, but also a sense of hope and compassion. Our dedicated staff works tirelessly to ensure that every person who walks through our doors feels cared for and valued. This Christmas, we celebrate the healing we've facilitated to more than 8530 people and the community bonds that have flourished through this essential service.

Boarding for Girls: Empowering Futures

Our boarding facility for girls continues to empower young women, giving them a safe haven to learn, grow, and thrive. We believe that every girl deserves the opportunity to access

education and develop her God-given potential. As we celebrate Christmas, we reflect on the transformation that is taking place in the lives of 85 girls, who are finding their voices and stepping confidently into the future, embodying the joy that Jesus brings.

School for Tribal Children: Nurturing Young Minds

At our school for tribal children, the spirit of Jesus inspires us to provide quality education and a loving environment where children can flourish. This Christmas, we rejoice in the knowledge that we are not just teaching subjects but also instilling values of love, kindness, and faith in our 465 students. Every lesson learned is a step closer to a brighter future, made possible through the love we share in Jesus' name.

Supplementary Classes for Adivasi Children: Bridging Gaps

In our efforts to reach remote villages, we are proud of the 40 villages of supplementary classes we offer to Adivasi children. By providing access to additional educational resources, we aim to bridge the gap for those who may otherwise be left behind. This Christmas, we celebrate each child's progress and the joy of learning that reflects the light of Jesus in the lives of more than 1000 children.

Indigenous Health Project: Caring for Community Well-Being

Our Indigenous Health Project is a testament to our commitment to holistic well-being. Through this initiative, we strive to address the unique health challenges faced by the Adivasi communities, ensuring they receive the care they need. During this Christmas season, we cherish the relationships we have built in 10 remote villages, reminding ourselves that Jesus' love calls us to serve those in need.

The Joy of Giving Jesus: A Celebration of Love and Hope

This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded of His compassionate love and the call to share it with others.

From the dispensary to the classrooms, and within the hearts of the girls in our boarding facility, and in our 12 catholic villages we are living out this calling. Jesus is born anew in the hearts of those we serve, bringing hope, joy, and transformation to their lives. we reflect on the impact of our collective efforts of this joyful journey of giving and serving. Your support and prayers continue to be the lifeblood of our mission, allowing us to touch lives and share the love of Jesus in remarkable ways. Wishing you a blessed and joyful Christmas
Filled with the spirit of giving and love.
In His Service, Anadasadan Community
"Jesus is born here today!"

Sisters of Anandsadan Shirpur



Faith in Action: Inspiring testimonies of serving others



Adoring the Child Jesus, proclaiming the hope of heaven

Every star has its beginning and the end. Their constant movement makes the galaxy brighter and beautiful. Each one of us is a shining star that illumines our communities, with the gift of our presence to each other. Each one tries to make our community, and wherever we are in the world, a much better place for all to live.

We are born in a community that only God the Creator has destined for us and we grow up with values and holiness through our life of Faith. But we have lots of choices to make in our lives and if we make a right choice we are sure that we are on the right path and thus experience God's graces and blessings in abundance. This choice will also help us to see the face of Baby Jesus in every person we meet in our lives. This year we sisters at Arambol made a choice to illuminate our Advent journey, letting the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love shine uniquely Week in various places.



The first week we had with the people of other faiths praying for each one of them and for their loved ones. **The Second week** we had with one of our Lay Canossian who is bedridden. Though she is bedridden sharing of her life experiences added joy in our lives.



The third candle representing joy was at a newly married couples' place. Their joy was tremendous to see us having a prayer service in their honour.



Finally **the fourth candle** was at Mandrem police station.

The police personnel appreciated such a unique gesture towards them during the Advent season.

We joyfully celebrated the Spirit of Christmas with our tuition children, the families we support through monthly ration and the campus workers. Migrant children beautifully enacted the nativity of Jesus reminding us of the humble yet profound birth of our Saviour. This was followed by the shepherds dance. The children's joy and excitement lit up the event as they whole heartedly participated in the enacting and dancing. As a token of love we shared gifts with children and the poor families spreading the warmth and generosity of the Christmas spirit. It was a celebration filled with joy, unity and gratitude- a reminder that

Christ's birth brings hope and love to all specially the least among us.



As a community we also celebrated Christmas at Mapusa District Hospital (Asilo) where our day was filled with joy, hope and a profound sense of togetherness as we shared the gift of presence and love. There were almost 150 patients along with Staff and Doctors. We visited several wards including General, I.C.U, N.I.C.U, pediatric, maternity, surgical, emergency isolation, dialysis, prenatal and rehabilitation. Each of them was given a token of love as we sang carols and wished them Happy Christmas. Our heartfelt conversations filled our day, with creating memories that still linger in our hearts. It was a celebration of life, and hope that Christmas brings, reminding us that in serving others we truly encounter Christ.

The year is coming to an end and the New Year 2025 is at our doorstep. To live up to our dreams let us by the example of St. Francis Xavier, our Patron Saint be His *proclaimers* of love and hope to all we meet. Let's not forget to adore Baby Jesus in each other and in living cribs of our communities. **Let us thank Him for His GIFT to us and BE like JESUS all the time - a dazzling**

‘STAR’, where we are born to bring LIGHT to all those who are in darkness. This we do by our very presence.

‘Help one another. This is what Jesus teaches us. This is what I do and I do it with my heart’Pope Francis.

**Sisters of Stella Maris
Arambol**



"Spreading Christmas Cheer to the Homebound"

A group of eight students from Std 9, accompanied by Sr. Agnes, Sr. Jenisha, and Sr. Margaret Terron, visited the homebound-individuals who are unable to leave their homes and often experience loneliness. During our visit, we depicted the Nativity scene and sang Christmas carols, bringing the festive spirit into their lives. We wished them a heartfelt "Happy Christmas," prayed with them, and sought their blessings. Each person we met was incredibly kind and sweet, and their warmth deeply touched us. Although our time with them was short, it was truly meaningful. We cherished every moment spent in their company and hoped that they enjoyed our presence as much as we did.

The experience was unforgettable and left a lasting impression on all of us. It reminded us of the joy that comes from sharing love and compassion with others. We continue to keep them in our prayers and hope they will pray for us too. This visit has taught us the importance of bringing light into the lives of others, especially those who need it the most.

Valencia std 9th Student.

Sacred Heart Canossa Convent School Mahim



Season of Hope: Messages of encouragement and renewal



Kintsugi

As Christmas draws close, we are reminded that Jesus comes to heal our brokenness. In the context of the overall disintegration in our world, we also experience again and yet again our own inner fragmentation. The Advent season invites us to heal our fractured lives (Ps. 137:3). John the Baptist urges us to “make His paths straight” (Jn. 1:23). Reflecting on this, I was reminded of a Japanese narrative on mending brokenness that I read some time ago.

The story is told of a Japanese shogun named Ashikaga Yoshimasa who had a favourite tea cup. He would use only that cup to drink his tea and whatever else. Unfortunately, one day it fell down and broke.



His courtiers brought him another new cup but Yoshimasa wanted his own special cup back. They sent the broken pieces to

artisans who patched it up and restored the cup. But now it looked ugly and scarred. And Yoshimasa was not pleased. Then someone told him about an artistic craftsman who lived far away. Yoshimasa set out on a journey and found the craftsman and pleaded with him to restore his cup. The craftsman worked on the cup, covered up the scarred areas with gold dust and lacquer and smoothened out the jagged points on it.



Lo and behold! He had transformed the ugly cup into a beautiful work of art. Yoshimasa was pleased.

It is not known whether this story is true or is only a legend. However, the practice of mending broken pottery and ceramics which originated in the 15th century is prevalent even to this day. It has evolved into a Japanese art form called kintsugi.

Kintsugi literally means to join with gold or ‘golden joinery’. When a cup, plate or pot is broken, artisans join it back together, sealing the separated edges with gold or silver dust mixed with lacquer. What you get back is an object that is somehow more beautiful than it was before the breakage occurred.

This brings us to a different way to think about overcoming the flaws, misfortunes, or accidental negative happenings in our lives. It’s not that we were perfect before something happened,

or the brokenness occurred to us. Rather it is that we wear our cracks with a new type of acceptance, learning from the mishap, summoning hidden qualities, and bringing beauty to our personality. The negative happenings in one's life can then be seen as stepping stones to growth and beauty.

Kintsugi symbolizes the fact that an object breaking is an integral part of its story that should not be hidden. It's not about hiding the fault but working at the transformation that makes the fault lines beautiful. Similarly, the negative incidents in our life are part of our life's history, which have the potential to bring about spiritual growth and enhance our life's journey. Thus, kintsugi represents a reconciliation with the flaws and accidents in our life. We strive then, not for perfection, but transformation, turning our weaknesses into strengths.

May the spiritual practice of kintsugi transform our on-going journey through life.

Nancy Vaz FdCC
Canossa Convent, Mahim



Sacred Sandals

Diwali prepares us for Christmas!

This startling thought got me interiorly somersaulting!

Yes, this revelation is what I am mulling over these days as one festive season wanes and the other looms up. The similarity of the personality of Bharat and John the Baptist is striking! Legend

says that Bharat, with the sandals of his brother upon the throne, stands by and awaits the rightful ruler of the kingdom, and bids his people to prepare for his home-coming. For Bharat, the exile of his brother from the kingdom, was a desert-like experience in his heart!

John the Baptist goes into the desert! The thirsty landscape reflects the state of his spirit as he yearns for his Master and Messiah. And here is where he prepares God's people to yearn and prepare the way for the Lord! "Are you the One who is to come?" he was asked. "No! I am not," he replies with forthright humility, "but after me comes the One, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie!" (Jn. 1: 19 – 28))

So Advent reminds us of our call to ardent and reverential stewardship of the Kingdom within us and around us as we await our King! Yes, we live upon this earth not as owners and landlords, but as stewards and pilgrims of hope, in prayer, until He comes, our Lord and King! He will come, and bending down, remove our soiled sandals and wash our embarrassed tired feet, and say to us, "Blessed are you, Poor in spirit, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven!" (Mt 5:3)

As we gather around His manger this Christmas, our hearts throb with wonder and delight at our King, just like the shepherds, for He comes not to condemn, but to save! As we rise and greet each other the song of the angels echoes in our hearts, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people of goodwill!"

As we greet each other a "Happy Christmas", we do so in a spirit of reverential stewardship knowing *I am my brother's keeper*, until his King and mine come and claim us forever as His own.

Our prayer is that the nations imbibe this spirit of Reverential Stewardship, and bring true peace upon this earth!

Sr. Berlinda D’cruz



Journey to Bethlehem: Encountering the Messiah

Bethlehem, which translates to "House of Bread," holds a profound significance in the Christian faith. It is the birthplace of Jesus Christ, who referred to himself as the "Bread of Life" (John 6:35). Just as bread is essential for our physical sustenance, Jesus becomes the spiritual nourishment that gives us life.

As we embark on our journey to Bethlehem, we are reminded of the importance of meditation and reflection. Just as bread needs to be consumed and digested, we must internalize the living Word of God to nourish our spirits.

Our journey to Bethlehem invites us to focus on three key aspects:

1. The Word Made Flesh: Jesus' birth in Bethlehem reminds us that the Son of God took on human form, becoming flesh and blood. This reality challenges us to examine our lives and ensure we are grounded in reality, rather than living in a dream world.
2. Bethlehem: A Place of Limitation and Joy: The Nativity Church in Bethlehem is remarkably small, with a tiny entrance

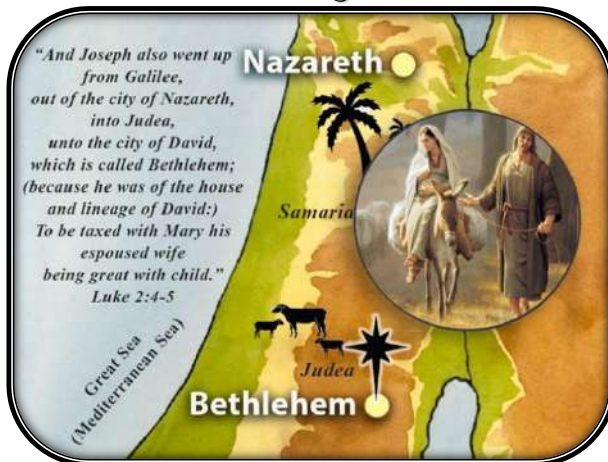
door. This humble setting teaches us that true joy and satisfaction can be found in simplicity and humility. In an age where our needs and wants often consume us, Bethlehem encourages us to reassess our priorities and focus on what truly matters.

3. Respect for the Human Body: Jesus' incarnation reminds us of the importance of respecting and honoring our human bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. As we journey to Bethlehem, we are invited to cultivate a deeper reverence for the bodily form and to recognize its inherent value and dignity.

As we travel to Bethlehem, let us remember that Jesus, the Bread of Life, calls us to become bread for others. May our journey be marked by a deeper understanding of the Word made flesh, a greater appreciation for simplicity and humility, and a profound respect for the human body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Sr. Louisa Gonsalves
Shrirampur.

Journey to Bethlehem



Off the Beaten Path

Knowing Magdalene.....



The cross of Christ on my shoulder

“I saw before me our Divine Redeemer without a Cross. He threw Himself into my arms. I remained profoundly recollected and closely united to Him. It was a consolation for me to see Him without a Cross and without a crown of thorns, and I was most ready to carry them myself, provided He was released from it ... *It seemed to me that He had transferred the Cross that He was carrying on to my shoulder.*”

Love is an ever - transforming power, but when the love is God, human beings come to be regenerated, sanctified and divinized by Him. Under the action of the Holy Spirit, Magdalene lives the joyous and painful experience of this transformation. After having contemplated Jesus Crucified at length and having shared His sufferings, feelings, affections and interest for the glory of the Father, Christ appears to her as a passionate lover. St. Teresa of Avila says: When the Lord in His mercy wants to answer the request of His spouse; He begins to show such a close friendship and affection to the soul, that it cannot be understood except by those who have experienced it.

Magdalene in the embrace of her Spouse responds with a similar tenderness: *“I remained profoundly recollected and closely united to Him...it was a consolation for me to see Him without a cross and without a crown of thorns”*. The growing intimacy of Magdalene with Christ is also a response of joy to see Him without a cross and without the crown of thorns any

more. “I remained....close....with Him” This expression echoes that of the Song of Songs: “I found Him whom my soul loves. She held Him and would not let Him go...” (Song: 3-4)

“I remained most ready to carry the cross myself, provided He was relieved of it.” St. Teresa has this to say about it:

“....the soul ends up by forgetting itself....in seeking to please Him to the maximum....This is the real sign to know whether one is dealing with favors and divine grace.”

1Cor: 6: 17 -“Anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him.” When love has transformed the beloved, it only asks to share the same love as the lover.

2Cor. 4:10 – “Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, ***so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.***” Magdalene clothed with love makes a total gift of herself in a passionate desire to forget herself completely, in order to be at the unconditional service of the Beloved.

“Oh, the powerful love of God!” exclaims St. Teresa; how true it is that the lover finds nothing impossible.... because it is a question of serving a spouse and a Lord who is so good! For Magdalene, love has become her only wealth, and with God who is love, everything becomes easy, acceptable and possible!

So as a novice, I am learning to bear my little crosses with joy. Together with our Lord and Mother Mary they will seem lighter to me.

Deepti Rani,

2nd yr. Novice.



For me to live is Christ

The tenderest transport of love caught hold of me, and I spent the rest of the time, in close union with God saying “My dear spouse”. I seemed to hear Him reply “My dear spouse”. - St. Magdalene of Canossa - Mm. P. 468

For St. Magdalene, God who speaks, acts and draws the creature into an embrace of infinite tenderness, and He knows all the tones of human love, because He is its source, unites Himself spiritually to His creature, using the language of human love. To Him, St. Magdalene makes herself available for the reception of a love that purifies her, clothes her with itself and renews her from within. It is possible when we are one with God.

To be one with God, we need to spend time in prayer. Prayer that does not change the one who prays, and does not lead him to identify himself, is not authentic prayer. But prayer is that which makes us like Christ. Only then the holiness of God becomes the holiness of man.

In that moment, a person asks nothing of God, because the love of God will have transformed the soul that desires him and Him alone. And also, prayer does not change God, but through prayer we let God change us, transform us, and make us like Him: holy and pure in His love.

Magdalene expresses this, saying, “with sentiments of love, I say to God, “*My dear spouse*”,..... I seemed to hear Him reply “*My dear spouse*”.

The spousal relationship is the strongest power that human beings can experience on earth. Having experienced this mystical marriage, Magdalene says “***I left, determined not to wish for anything but God alone***”. - Mm p.468 And she reached this goal, ‘God alone’ through the humanity of Jesus Christ, the Holy one, because, to be ‘one’ with God it is possible only through the Word Incarnate: *Jesus Christ*. St. Magdalene describes this experience of union with Christ in these words: ‘***I thought I would die of love, and there was nothing else I could think of if not Jesus Christ***’. Mm p. 462

As I read Magdalene’s experience, I understood what St. Paul says: ‘***For me, to live is Christ!*** [Phil 1:21]. Then I felt so much joy!

As I go through my novitiate experience, my own desire for union with God grows. In the novitiate I feel so happy and grateful to have this opportunity to know God more deeply and grow in union with Him!

Kalpana Savara,
2nd yr. Novice.



God alone and Christ Crucified

“.....plant firmly the crucified Lord in your heart.”

- St. Magdalene of Canossa

In Magdalene’s identification with Christ Crucified she knows God Alone because Jesus Crucified stands for the total stripping

of self in humility and poverty and the total gift of self in love. She does not encounter Him at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, at Jordan, in the desert, along the lake of Galilee, at Cana, not among the crowds of Jerusalem- singing Hosanna, but she meets Him on the way of the cross and finally at the foot of the cross as she experienced the many sorrowful events of her life right from childhood in her family, and in her efforts to set up her religious family and its works.

Magdalene's prayer is characterized by God's inner voice within her. In Christ's pierced side she found God alone. In that heart her soul received the strength to strip itself.

I realized that during meditation and in moments of prayer we encounter God deeply as our own life experiences get integrated with the life of Christ.

Her spiritual director Don Luigi Libera tells her that the less she thinks, the more her heart will be attracted by God. Her search for God alone enabled her to love Him more even in the moments of trials and to detach herself of all that is not Him. She desired to be reduced to dust in order to make Jesus known and loved. She protested to the Lord saying that she didn't want anything more, not even companions (human support). She seeks for her own sanctification and God's consolation.

The outcome of the purifying trials is always the total and unconditional abandonment to the will of God. She saw the Crucified Lord in a vision; she saw Him without wounds or cross or any suffering. She understood that she is called to suffer for Him, to be wounded for Him and to carry her own crosses in

order that she also may participate in the Lord's passion. God truly put her in a condition of poverty, of surrender and of detachment of everything that is not Himself. She felt that when God's glory requires it, she has no longer a sense of cloister walls, and so she writes: ***the true convent of the Daughters of Charity is the wounded side of Jesus Crucified.***

Now in the novitiate, I feel drawn to conform my life to Christ Crucified, and fall in love with the Lord. In God alone we find everything. I desire to imitate the virtues of the Crucified and to plant Him firmly in my heart. Perhaps this quote best sums up my yearning now:

"It is not God alone and Christ crucified, but GOD ALONE IS CHRIST CRUCIFIED." T.M. Piccari 'Sola con Dio Solo'

Lithiya Mary Francis,
Novice (2022-24)



In solitude and silence

In the morning early before dawn He got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. [Mk 1: 35]

We read in The Great Model, in the chapter on SILENCE AND MODESTY, that, 'to teach us the urgent necessity we have to cultivate the inner life, our Divine Savior used to spend long hours in ***prayer, in solitude, and silence***, before going back to

teach and to preach and to perform miracles.’ After his baptism at the Jordan by John, Jesus allowed himself to be led by the Spirit into the **desert** to be put to the test. [Mt 4: 1-11] The ‘desert’ is a place of purification of intentions, to check out one’s own will in comparison to God’s will, and to draw divine strength to adhere to God’s will.

Magdalene, in contemplating the Divine Saviour who had such a busy life as he went about doing good, yet made an uncompromising and deliberate effort to spend time alone with God Alone, understood the value of prayer and the spirit of prayer in her life. She shares the same wisdom with her daughters: “Our communities, I repeat, must breathe recollection, quiet and tranquility everywhere, because the true spirit of a Daughter of Charity should be that of an ***anchorite at home and of an apostle in the world.***” (The Great Model p.55) For us too, the desert, solitude and silence are valuable in as much as we place ourselves in an attitude of humble and trustful attentiveness to God the Father and dispose ourselves interiorly to carry out His plan for us.

In the Novitiate, in my first year, I did not realize the value of silence and solitude so much, but now in the second year, I have begun to appreciate the value of recollection and silence to deepen my experience with God. It is helping me to grow in inner freedom as a child of God. I feel happy and more connected with God.

Exalin Mary Paul,
Novice (2022-24)



Thirst on “The Mount of lovers”

As I see her, St. Magdalene was a woman thirsting for love and love was the first value in her relationship with God. She fixes her eagle gaze on the person of Christ, the God-man and sees in Him the infinite power of the love of the Father. St. Magdalene defines Calvary as “The mount of lovers” and there together with Mary “Mother of Charity at the foot of the cross, she learned from Him who alone knows how to love, “the greatest love” for the heavenly Father and all humankind. For her, ***Calvary was both the point of departure and of arrival for her sanctification.***

When St. Magdalene discovers the love of Christ on Calvary, all the other treasures of the world fall apart. She leaves behind all that she possesses and changes her way of life.

When she climbed the hill of Calvary, she listened to the voice of Jesus, who, tired and thirsty says to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well; “***Give me a drink***” *Jn 4:5* St. Magdalene understood and looked upon Jesus nailed to the cross, dying, and listened to his gasping voice: “***I Thirst***” (*Jn 19:28*) Today, Christ repeats his request and relives the torments of his passion in the poorest of our brothers and sisters. St. Magdalene heard his cry of thirst and responded passionately in her times and place.

Now in the novitiate ***I realize that it is our time to listen to his cry of thirst.*** So as I contemplate Jesus Crucified, I listen to him with the heart of Mary at the foot of the Cross, of St. Magdalene and my own heart and ask God for the grace to know how to quench His thirst in my daily life and in the life of the people he is preparing to send me to.

Manisha Pawara

2nd yr. Novice.



An amazing growth in charity

I have been reflecting on Magdalena Gabriela of Canossa who was born in the most magnificent palace of Verona on March 1, 1774. From the moment of her birth she experienced rejection. With the death of her father, consternation and bewilderment fell on the young family with the violence of a storm. Magdalene, intelligent as she was, grasped at once that something terrible had happened. When she realized that her dear father would not come back and that her waiting for him was in vain, a cold sensation of hopeless emptiness filled her young heart then she felt urged to turn to God, to find in Him stable protection and sure refuge. In Magdalena's heart the wound caused by her father's death had begun to heal when a new one, still more cruel, the departure of her mother left her in great sorrow. She was just beginning to understand and realize that the happiness which her little friends enjoyed due to their parents' care and kisses, would never be her's nor her brother's and sisters'. During this time she faced many difficulties and she discovered the profound significance in the cross of Christ. Sorrow is a good teacher. But it is not easy to accept it.



She came to know and love God in her family. As in the afternoon she took her daily ride in the family coach, she noticed what was

going on and was stunned by what she saw: children in rags, thin and hungry women, poor, crumbling homes; poverty everywhere. Though in the beginning she only thought of offering herself to God as a cloistered nun, praying for society, she always had a feeling that this was not enough. She wanted to get involved, to help those less fortunate. The seed of her apostolic vocation was cast then. How beautiful that picture which shows her, as a rich young woman distributing alms to beggars at the entrance of her palace. It was a way to apologize to these poor people for being rich and different, a way to show them in practice that she cared.

During the difficult situation of her illness, her sympathy had often gone out to the numberless who had no one to help and comfort them. During that prolonged trial under the cruelty of her governess, the young girl sensitive as she was came to understand the tragedy of so many children who are without love or support. The plight of so many young girls, without assistance and guidance. It was then that she began envisaging a way to help them.

Here in the Novitiate I understand how Magdalene let God touch her life, resulting in loving people with God's heart. I realize that my life is a precious gift of God, and if I let God take over my life, I can do great good in this world, just like Magdalene.

Magdalena Baxla
Novice (2022-24)



‘A Heart Overflowing With Love’ - Magdalene the Friend

“How lovely, my dear friend, how great would be my joy if we could meet at Parma” says St. Magdalene in one of her letters to Carolina Durini.

She had entered into a friendship with Carolina Durini in November 1800 at the age of 26. She had just lost her invaluable spiritual guide and had discovered that, after years of darkness, doubts, scruples and fears, she could now stand on her own feet. She could accept the plan of God among her needy brothers and sisters to whom she longed to communicate the message that Jesus loved them and cared for them.

When we read the letters to her bosom friend we are surprised at discovering the various aspects of her personality: the kindness of her heart, her sincere concern for humanity, the deep friendship, the appreciation for all that was beautiful and good in her life, the purity of her heart, the constant effort to be available to all, the serenity which reigned in her heart, her wit and humour, and above all her eagerness to make Jesus known and loved.

In the letters we discover to what extent Magdalene could welcome, appreciate and cultivate a genuine friendship. Her own relationship with Durini was “love at first sight” and it was a love that would last a life time.

In one of her letters she writes, “Be convinced that it is impossible for me to explain how much I love you and how great my friendship for you is”. And again she writes, “If I were to follow my whims, my dear friend, I would never end my letters. Oh dear God how I wish I were a bird, then how often I would take the road to Milan. But I need patience.

It is refreshing to notice how this friendship was a very human affair, a relaxed one that the two of them thoroughly enjoyed. It is clear that a divine love had already flourished between them.

Like Don Libera, Carolina Durini played an important role in the life of our Foundress. Magdalene who is known from these letters is wonderfully human and yet wonderfully supernatural. She is indeed a saint with a heart of flesh.

I realize that we too need true friends like St. Magdalene and Carolina who lead us to God. Friends who understand, comfort, encourage, challenge, guide, help, share in our moments of joy and pain and are faithful and trustworthy. I feel that a genuine friend is the one who is concerned about my growth and is able to tell when I go wrong. I pray for the grace to recognize and welcome such friends as the Lord sends them to me, so that we can help each other, grow in love to the point that we understand and realize the words of Jesus, ***“No greater love can a man have than this, to lay down his life for his friend.”***

We lose people we love, but we never lose true friends.

Manisha Soreng,

2nd year Novice. (2022-24)



The primacy of God's will

“Seek you first the kingdom of God and all the things shall be added unto you.” - Mt 6:33

In St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, he writes - “Our Homeland is Heaven”. On this earth we are on a journey, this journey is nothing but to find out the will of God for us and fulfill it in our lifetime. It is not an easy task as we are never sure what His will is for us. There are only two people in this whole universe who can tell us what is God's will - one is God Himself and the other is we ourselves. This answer lies deep within us and we have to discover it at each moment. It is not easy for anyone and neither was it for St. Magdalene of Canossa. God's plan for her was very unique and very different. Let us see how, with the help of Don Libera, she not only found out God's will, but also fulfilled it in her life.

In July 1792, Don Luigi Libera took up the far from easy task of being the spiritual director of Magdalene Gabrielle of Canossa. He was faced with a delicate and complex case. Young 18 year old Marchioness had already returned twice to her family from the cloister. Although she aspired to live a life consecrated to God and had taken the adequate steps of joining the cloister, her vocation was not clear. All the same she continued to dream of being called “the Lord's Discalced”.

Now it was up to Don Libera to clarify her vocation within the confused mixture of sentiments and plans that kept her in anxiety, because if they did not clash with each other, they were at variance and complex, and therefore not easy to interpret.

He started his task of spiritual direction in the Canossa Palace with an interview. As time progressed, he began suggesting to her various things such as visits to the Blessed Sacrament, recitation of the Litany of Our Lady and of the Saints, recitation of the Miserere, frequent reception of Holy Communion which led her to experience peace in her heart. Gradually, there in the deep peace of her heart she realized that the God of her life dwells within her. Consequently, she kept recollection and silence throughout the day. She would hear His voice clearly and would understand His inspirations through which she discovered God's will in her life.

As a novice, as I engage in discerning God's will for me, I feel that the Lord is using different ways and gradually revealing His plan for me. As I look at my journey so far, I clearly see God's hand at work in my life, and I put my trust in Him, certain that He will lead me throughout my life and bring His plan to completion.

Ruby Anthony Monteiro
Novice (2022-24)



Canossa Blooms

After the death of St. Magdalene our mother, the institute came under the leadership of Sr. Cristina Pilotti, who was, her secretary and closest collaborator for a long time. However, Sr. Cristina died a few months later, and she was succeeded by Sr. Angela

Bragato (1780-1848), who was one of the first Daughters of St. Magdalene and already superior of the house in Trent. Under her leadership, the institute grew and she opened many houses.

Following the example of St. Magdalene, who began her apostolate among the poor and wanted charity to have no limits, in 1860, a group of Daughters of Charity, under the inspiration of M. Luigia Grassi, left the community of Pavia which had Msgr. Ramazzotti Founder of the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Mission, as spiritual director, for Hong Kong.

A few years later, they went to China where they opened schools, boarding houses and orphanages and worked there until 1949. Between the 19th and 20th century the Canossian Missionaries spread to Timor, India, Singapore and other countries in Asia and then to all the continents. From the land of Africa came the splendid figure of a Canossian in the person of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was from Dafur, Sudan, sold as a slave to the Italian Consul towards the end of the 19th century in Sudan. She was able to follow him back to Italy, where she managed to obtain her freedom. Having met the Daughters of Charity in Venice, she came to know the Christian faith and was baptized in 1890. Later she joined the Institute and lived an exemplary life.

St. Magdalene was canonized by St. John Paul II on 2nd October 1988. This same Pope beatified St. Josephine Bakhita, popularly known as “Mother Moretta”(The dark skinned mother) on 17th May 1992 and canonized her on 1st October 2000. Some months after the canonization of St. Magdalene of Canossa, in April 1989, in a homily during the Eucharistic celebration in honor of the new saint, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, who was then

Archbishop of Milan, highlighted the deep spiritual roots of St. Magdalene's work saying: "Reflecting on the life of St. Magdalene of Canossa, we can single out two particular aspects of the mystery of the new covenant:

1. The symbol and central event of the covenant: The Cross
2. It's fundamental law of Charity."

As I journey as a novice, I realize that the Canossians are rooted in the love of God and branch out in charity towards the poor. So I, who feel called to this Institute, also grow in sensitivity towards the poor and needy, and prepare myself to go wherever I am sent by the institute in the name of God, to serve His poor.

Roseline Arika

2st year Novice



St. Magdalene of Canossa - Guided By the Word of God

The Gospel, for St. Magdalene, was not just information, but a real transformation to a Eucharistic life.

She based her life, works, writings, and the Rules on the Gospel message. The language in which the Gospel is proclaimed is renewed with pastoral wisdom and independence. In the Canossa palace, she shouldered responsibility with firmness. Prayer was placed at the center of the family life. In those days Italy was invaded by Napoleon who curtailed the privileges of the aristocrats. Magdalene, overwhelmed by the Word of God, re-organized the values of her life, on which depended her choices,

confronting them not with the values of the world but that of the Gospel.

She discovered her vocation to a life of active charity while attending Holy Mass. The verse from the book of **Tobit 12:12** “**The works of charity are as precious to God as prayers,**” had a striking effect on Magdalene. In ***Psalm 50*** the Miserere which she recited daily, helped her free herself from feeling guilty and she abandoned herself to God’s mercy. “**I will teach transgressors your ways**” **Ps 50:15**. It led her to teach catechism to her domestic staff. The Gospel phrase “**Go into the whole world**” **Mk16:15** urged Magdalene to move with the times towards a universal mission.

Thus we see that the word of God received, meditated, treasured in our hearts nourishes our existence; it empowers us to love as the Lord loves us and to share the same love with others.

Today is the opportune time to remain firmly anchored in the life-giving Word of God. We allow ourselves to be challenged by the reality of people and continue to tell about God’s love in multi-ethnic, multi-religious situations where faith is not firm. In times of disorientation, religious and ethnic pluralism, making Jesus known remains as a yearning.

(Ref. to books of the Institute and the Chapter
Document 2022)

Richa Mary Fernandes

Novice (2022-24)



Building a culture of the heart

St. Magdalene of Canossa urges all her daughters, to believe that “The Heart of Education is the Education of the Heart.”

Both, excruciating pain and unbridled joy that we experience as part of our life’s journey stem from our heart, because this is the seat of all emotions and feelings. This then is the reason behind St. Magdalene exhorting us her daughters to pay attention to the proper formation of our own hearts so that we can form the hearts of those under our care, in the way she envisaged.

The world today boasts of people with high IQ (Intelligence Quotient), but the need of the hour is persons with high EQ (Emotional Quotient) and SQ (Spiritual Quotient). We need to focus on the intricate formation of head and heart, and not the head alone. When we go with the culture of the world which most often tackles problems by using logic, reasoning and the like, in other words using the head alone, we only end up making matters worse. Those of us who function only at the head level fail to understand the feelings of others or empathize with their pain. When the head and heart do not twin in unison, we become self-centered persons.

The messy reality of life is that the world today is riddled with people who are broken and wounded, people who have spiritual, emotional, psychological needs that have to be met. They need to encounter persons who will listen to them and not simply hear their problems and offer instant solutions.

Alternatively, they need to engage with people who also function at the heart level, who will be able to understand their pain and suffering. We cannot run our homes, families, communities, institutions or organizations with our head alone but a combination of head and heart will most certainly work wonders.



It is an infallible truth that those of us who function at only the head level will plan perfectly for all our endeavours and execute them to the end with the help of others, but friendly, we end up taking all the credit for ourselves. Our achievements are usually characterized by us running rough shod over those unable to remonstrate with our wrong attitudes and actions, thereby crushing people's spirits and leaving wounded hearts in our wake.

The Almighty is beseeching us to go forth and make a difference in the world by working to cultivate the 'Culture of the Heart' together with the HEAD and to add to these two, another 'H'..... HANDS. Once we learn to listen i.e. hear with the heart in order to feel and understand what others may be going through, our head will fathom best what we can offer to those approaching us and our hands will reach out accordingly.

A culture of the heart liberates people, allowing for greater acceptance of the help they are in need of. One of the titles bestowed on St. Magdalene is 'Weaver of Hope and Life'. This is so apt for today's world which is besieged with warfare, rivalry, competition and much more. All the negativity in the world stems from personal transgression, covetousness, imperfection, pride the list can go on. We need to replace this antagonistic negativism with plain and simple COMPASSION, an emotion that comes straight from the heart.

Indeed, a combination of heart and head can bring about transformation and change. We can cause miracles- big and small to happen every day in our own lives and in those of others only when we are in touch with our hearts. When we relate to people who are effectual at the head level only, there is an absolute disconnect in our relationships. This is perhaps because we see them as treating others as inanimate objects that can be used and discarded. Ego clashes are then inevitable. All of us and in

particular we religious need to take cognizance of the truth that if we want our efforts in transforming the areas under our influence, to be substantial, it is absolutely necessary to function at both head and heart levels.

Often times we find it easy to jell with people who function at the heart level but face a roadblock when trying to build a rapport with those who operate only at a head level. In order to be more humane and to feel what another person is feeling, necessitates us to be people who reciprocate with head and heart. How can we make ourselves aware which of the two types of people spoken of above we are dealing with? It is very easy for humans to camouflage their actual selves but there are a few tell-tale characteristics inherent in us that we exhibit in our day-to-day activities that can point towards which type we swing.

Presenting a bird's eye view of some distinguishing features of persons who conduct themselves at the head level only:

- They are very good organizers.
- They plan and execute everything very systematically and without a hitch. Punctuality is a hallmark, as is being multi taskers.
- They are excellent orators and can be creative in handling varied situations.
- They have great reasoning prowess even to the extent of questioning at every stage whatever is being done in a particular situation they are handling.
- Being practical is a way of life for them. Since they are more often than not working with how their intellect guides them, they show a preference for working with those who are less educated, less intelligent, much younger than them or those who are submissive, so that they can have their way and theirs will be the last word on any subject.

- They tend to be overtly suspicious of people because they over think everything within their grasp.
- Very often they are perceived controlling people by subtle ways of threatening. They speak not of their own experiences but will collect information from multiple sources and then speak. Hence their words do not stir the hearts of the people who listen to them.
- Their sharing may be pretty impressive but the people listening to them feel as if they have had to endure something forcibly because at the end of it their lives are not touched or changed in any way.
- They are easily recognized by their attitude of being barely able to tolerate those not on their level with a pinch of salt and with a simmering anger that can explode even with a minor provocation.
- Even when they are speaking to others normally there is not only a commanding but demanding tone to their words. They do not find it easy to understand the feelings of others.
- Experiencing and sharing compassion for those not close to them is not a part and parcel of their lives. They don't feel the need to take into consideration what others might want or not want. It is usually their way or the highway.
- Most of the times they are busy trying to see how they can get the best out of situations and people all under the guise of development. All these features simply mean that they lose out on the real essence of life.

On the other hand, persons who *function at a heart level* are compassionate, practical and applicable.

- ❖ They are submissive without giving up on their self-esteem and can be generous to a fault.
- ❖ They will go out of their way to make time to listen to others with an open mind and heart.

- ❖ They are not ashamed of showing their feelings for others even in a public domain.
- ❖ They will ensure no stone is left unturned in their efforts of making good things happen to those in need.
- ❖ They are people who go out on a limb sometimes even with meagre resources to reach out to the poorest of the poor.
- ❖ They will walk an extra mile with a big broad smile.
- ❖ They are a living example of Christ's presence in the world, of being His hands and His feet. In other words, they are a walking and talking Bible, the one that many would want to read.

My incentive in writing this piece is to get each one of us, me included, to examine ourselves and find out which group I belong to.

Can I affirm that I am a person of heart and head? Or do I let only my heart or my head rule my life? It would help to remember that to be bridges of love and hope in a broken world we need to be persons whose lives resonate with the dual effectiveness of our heads and our hearts.

Sr. Monica Cardoz



Baptism

OF THE

Lord



"This is my beloved Son in
whom I am well pleased."

Matt. 3:17

God's Love
enculturated in humanity



SPANDAN

