



The Dawn

Savera

Vol. 50 Issue 2

May - August 2026

Rooted to WALK TOGETHER

John 15:4



Luke 24:13-35



Colossians 2:6-7



Hearty Congratulations

To His Lordship

Bishop Francisco Antonio Agnelo Pinheiro

On Being Ordained as

Bishop Of Sindhudurg

The Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Sancoale-Goa,

Implore God's celestial blessings on your episcopacy. May the Good Shepherd who called you guide your steps, strengthen your hands, and fill your heart with His wisdom and love.

As you shepherd His flock, may you find joy in service, courage in trials, and peace in His presence.

Ad multos annos!



Congratulations on this milestone - your Silver Jubilee!

May you continue to serve the Lord with the same zeal and enthusiasm that marked the beginning of your ministry.

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From the Editor's Desk

ROOTED TO WALK TOGETHER



“Live in union with him, keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him...” urges St. Paul in Col. 2: 6-7. Likewise, Isaiah 61:3 tells us about “trees of righteousness” that happens when we are rooted in Christ. We become these trees that have their roots deeply planted in the Lord, receiving constant nourishment from Him. Galatians 5:22-23 reminds us, such trees bear fruit regularly, producing the fruits of the Spirit.

As we grow strong in Christ and become like these mighty trees, we provide rest and refuge to those in need around us. This spells out the Rootedness of walking together in spiritual stability, abiding in Christ and sharing the communal journey alike on the road to Emmaus.

The 91st foundation day of the Congregation is a celebration of being deeply rooted and continually built on a firm Foundation (Eph. 2:20). Today, filled with gratitude, we remember our Founder who, deeply rooted in Christ, heard His word and putting it into practice built the Congregation on solid rock.

So, how can we remain rooted? Jesus gives us the answer in Luke 6:47: “*Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice...*”. This is what it means to abide in Him and reflects the Emmaus disciples, whose hearts burned as they listened to the scriptures.

In essence, the Emmaus story is a living demonstration of Jesus bringing comfort, joy, and hope to those who mourn, which eventually invites us to abide in Him, and spread our roots deep and wide. In nature, trees whose roots don't go deep gets interconnected with the neighbouring roots to stand strong. Similarly, we fulfil our mission, when we are rooted in communion, not by dominance.

A tree does not grow roots just for itself; it grows them so it can stretch out its branches and shield others. That is where the walking begins. Like the lonely disciples on the road to Emmaus, we all experience days of doubt, sadness, or worry. The beautiful truth of that story is that Jesus did not wait for them in a temple; He met them in their helplessness on the road. He walked with them, listened to their hurts, and warmed their hearts.

Walking together is an *art of love*. It means slowing down our pace so we do not leave the weary behind. It means looking into each other's eyes and truly listening. So, let us ask the Lord to keep us deeply rooted in Him, and not in the ways of this world.

Sr. Molly Fernandes sfn

From the Superior General's Desk

Message



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

“Trees don't travel... yet forests grow.”

This simple image invites us into the heart of our theme: ***Rooted to Walk Together***. In a world that often equates growth with movement, speed, and visible success, the Gospel offers a quieter truth—real growth is not about moving more, but about rooting deeper.

Jesus' invitation, ***“Abide in me,”*** is not a call to passivity, but to depth. To abide is to remain, to stay, to be held in a relationship that nourishes from within. Like the hidden roots of a tree, our life in Christ may not always be seen, but it is what sustains everything else. What appears still on the outside is, in fact, a silent and steady expansion within.

Nazareth reveals this mystery beautifully. The Holy Family did not travel widely, perform great public acts, or seek recognition. Yet, in the ordinariness of daily life—prayer, work, silence, and mutual love—Jesus grew “in wisdom and grace.” Their rootedness in God and in one another became the quiet strength that would one day bless the world.

Our Founder, Fr. Faustino, understood this deeply. His vision was not built on restless activity, but on a life anchored in God, where love is lived faithfully in the small, hidden, and often unnoticed moments. He reminds us that mission flows not from constant movement, but from a heart that abides.

The Emmaus journey, too, begins not with clarity, but with confusion. Two disciples walk away, yet it is precisely there—on that ordinary road—that Christ draws near. Walking together does not require perfection; it requires presence. And that presence is sustained when we are rooted.

Today, our challenge is gentle but real: in moments of difficulty, misunderstanding, or restlessness, do we keep moving on... or do we choose to remain, to deepen, to root ourselves more firmly in Christ and in one another?

A forest grows not because trees wander, but because they stay, connect, and draw life from deeper sources.

May we, as a Nazareth family, learn this quiet strength—to abide more deeply, to walk more faithfully, and to love more steadily. Stay Rooted!

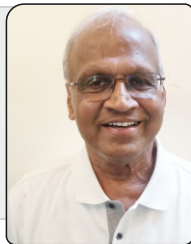
Wishing you a grace filled Happy Foundation Day!
With prayers and blessings

Sr. Berna Rodrigues sfn
Superior General

I THE DEEPENING (THE ROOTS)

FOUNDER'S CORNER

FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE CHARISM OF THE FOUNDER FR. FAUSTINO, THE SFN SISTERS WALK TOGETHER



Fr. Tony Fernandes sfx

There are various charisms, but one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4). There are various Religious Congregations in the Catholic Church, founded by their Founders obviously with unique charisms, typical to the need of the time of Foundation. The unique CHARISM that took birth through the visionary, zealous and courageous Founder ought to be reflected again and again but the members of that congregation in their General Chapters, Annual Community Meetings, House Meetings, Retreats and even personally by each member of the Society. The charism ought to be the life-line of the Congregation so that they are firmly rooted in it and that the members collectively as well as individually walk the same walk and talk the same talk, keeping in mind the Founder and the first inspiration he was enlightened by the Spirit of God to give birth to a new and unique way of living the Gospel.

The Founder's "YES" was the seed which was planted in the life of the Church, as a unique gift to the Church. For the SFN, it is *"to serve the poor, educate the young, especially women, and bring healing to the broken"*. This seed in course of time grows and becomes a tree that truly yields good fruits by its members if lived according to the charism of the Founder.

As years go by, the Founder too passes to the next life, sometimes down the lane the first vision slowly tends to be watered down. The pioneering



members who lived in close proximity to the Founder have also gone to their eternal abode. With new and modern ways of understanding Religious Life, it so happens that we lose the original fervor, zeal and commitment to the charism and turn out to be excellent managers in our Religious Institutions. Instead of making Christ the center of the apostolate, the means to fulfill the charism shifts to being good and professional managers in the Apostolate.

The fall in vocations also is due to lack of authenticity and genuine followers of Christ. Youth nowadays want to see models in following the Way of Christ. Most probably they see each member walking helter-skelter in one's own way, but not walking together in the footsteps of the Founder and its charism.

Each member of the Congregation individually and collectively should be worthy of following, living and walking the same original charism hand in hand. One dream has to be lived and to be made the part of one's life as the worthy member of that particular Congregation.

Founders' vision and goal should not be for a museum. It is not a visit once in life time event during formation and then dump it in the waste bins. Vision and Charism of the Founder ought to be the catalyst for the future. The Founder ought to challenge the members of the Congregation to remain relevant to the Charism according to the times, in spite of the various challenges and difficulties faced by one's Congregation. It has also to be relevant to the needs of the times.

We do not look forward with naivety, but with hope. Even if our congregation is small or facing difficulties, we know that true growth comes from being rooted in Christ. Like the jack pine tree that releases its seeds only after a fire, we can produce new life from our challenges. We are invited to renew our commitment to live our charism with creativity and compassion. The future is filled with hope because it belongs to God, and He continues to walk with us. The strength of a congregation is not the number of the members, but the quality of the members.

Therefore, every day, let each of the member carry the flame of the Founder. All must strive to be people of joy, gratitude, and hope, knowing that the God who began this good work, will surely bring it to completion, provided every member strives to be firmly rooted in their unique charism and walk together hand in hand. Let's remember the saying "United we stand and divided we fall" and what a fall that will be! Every member therefore, ought to constantly ask oneself "Am I true to the Founder's charism?" and "Do we, as a community, walk together tying to fulfill the Founder's charism?"

(The writer is the Director of Shantidham, retreat centre, at Zalor, Goa.)

FEATURE:

THE GOSPEL BENEATH THE SOIL*Fr. Gaurav Joseph, OFM Cap*

One misconception about trees is that their root systems are as deep as their height. Some spiritual authors and teachers reference this idea as a metaphor for spiritual depth. Yet, the true structure of most tree roots tells a different story that may offer us a richer lesson. In fact, about 80 per cent of studied systems do not form deep roots. Trees in desert regions sometimes develop deeper taproots for water absorption and anchorage, but this is less common. Roots generally require oxygen, which is typically more abundant near the surface, to facilitate cellular respiration; deeper soil has less oxygen and nutrients necessary for roots. This reality suggests that, just as trees thrive through more complex, interconnected root systems rather than extreme depth alone, our own faith journeys may also benefit from a broader, more relational foundation.

However, it has been found that trees spread their roots widely, often more than 2-3 times the size of their crowns. Even massive trees, such as ancient Redwoods, have comparatively shallow roots but anchor themselves by interlocking with neighbouring trees' roots. In forests, where many trees share the same soil space, research indicates that trees can communicate and share nutrients through this interconnected network. This has



led to the theory of mycorrhizal networks, also known as the “wood-wide web.” Mediated by fungal hyphae, different trees are linked in a symbiotic, mostly mutualistic relationship, and exchange carbon, water, and nutrients through this network. A related concept is the “Mother Tree” Hypothesis, proposed by Canadian scientist Dr Suzanne Simard, suggesting that older, larger “mother trees” nourish younger trees and communicate warnings about threats, such as insects.

This structure is probably a better fit for the ideals we are called to as disciples of Jesus. After all, Jesus does present the greatest commandment as a bipartite argument:

He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' (Mt. 22:37-40; NRSVACE)

Simply put, our religiosity does not suffice to justify our discipleship if it remains disjunct from the sufferings, anxieties and realities of the people around us. Christian life is not merely vertical; it is necessarily horizontal. It is consistent with the Christian understanding that salvation belongs to the whole community. Salvation, though carrying personal connotations, leans towards a shared, interdependent journey rather than a solitary, private experience; it is a collective restoration of humanity into the "Body of Christ" or "household of God" (cf. The Journey to Emmaus; Lk. 24:13-35). Like the interlocking roots of the forest, the Christian vocation demands interconnectedness, mutual nourishment and shared responsibility.

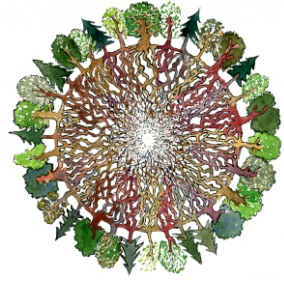
This has become terrifyingly relevant in the present age. We are at a point in time when we are more connected technologically than ever in human history, yet increasingly fragmented emotionally, politically, and, worse, spiritually. We are trying to communicate constantly, while loneliness becomes an epidemic. We celebrate globalisation while migrants continue to die anonymously on highways and borders. We live amidst unprecedented tech advancement while war, hunger, ecological destruction and economic inequality deepen across nations. In such a world, discipleship cannot be reduced to private piety or ritual correctness alone.

St Paul reminds us: "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Burdens, however, cannot be borne from a distance. They require encounter. Jesus Himself consistently entered into the realities of people's lives: touching lepers, speaking with outcasts, eating with sinners and weeping with the grieving. The Incarnation itself is the ultimate rejection of a distant spirituality. God becomes flesh and dwells among humanity. Consequently, every authentic Christian vocation must carry this incarnational dimension.

The image of the forest also challenges the dangerous myth of radical self-sufficiency. Modern society glorifies the isolated individual: the self-made person who supposedly needs no one. Yet both Scripture and human experience reveal otherwise. Human beings are relational by nature. We survive through communities, families, friendships and institutions of care. Likewise, religious life and Christian discipleship cannot flourish in isolation from the community. Faith weakens when reduced to individual consumption disconnected from shared responsibility.

The early Christian communities understood this profoundly. The Acts

of the Apostles describes believers who “[everything they owned was] held in common” and who ensured “there was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:32-34). Their witness was not merely doctrinal but social. They embodied an alternative way of living within a harsh imperial world. In many ways, the credibility of Christianity today still depends less on eloquent preaching and more on whether Christians remain capable of building communities of compassion, justice and hope amidst widespread fragmentation.



This interconnectedness also extends beyond human relationships to creation itself. The ecological crisis is not merely a scientific or political issue; it is deeply spiritual. Climate change, deforestation, pollution and the reckless exploitation of resources reveal a distorted understanding of dominion detached from stewardship. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, repeatedly emphasises that everything is interconnected. The destruction of ecosystems is ultimately to the detriment of human dignity, especially for the poor, who suffer the consequences first and most severely.

The forest survives because its members participate in mutual exchange. When one part is damaged, the entire ecosystem weakens. Similarly, societies built upon exploitation, exclusion and indifference cannot sustain themselves indefinitely. The Gospel invites us toward another logic: one rooted not in domination but in communion.

This communion, however, is not sentimental. Real interconnectedness demands sacrifice, patience and accountability. It requires learning to forgive in communities, to remain faithful amidst disappointment and to continue serving even when recognition is absent. The hidden work of roots is rarely visible, yet without it, the tree cannot stand. Much of Christian witness resembles this hidden labour: prayer that no one sees, acts of kindness unnoticed by the world, perseverance amidst exhaustion and quiet fidelity to truth in times of confusion.

Perhaps this is what hope resembles in our present age. Not naïve optimism or denial of suffering, but the stubborn decision to remain rooted together despite uncertainty. A forest survives storms not because each tree stands alone, but because beneath the surface, there exists an unseen network holding everything together.

The Christian calling is similar. We are called not merely to grow upward toward heaven but outward toward one another. Only then do we become truly rooted: nourished by grace, strengthened through communion and capable of sheltering a wounded world.

(The writer is currently the Editor of Indian Currents)

SPIRITUALITY

SILENT PRAYER TO A LIVING WITNESS*Fr. Jovito D Souza sj*

One Sunday morning, Mary quietly sat on the last pew in the church, her mind cluttered with the week's concerns: an ill parent, a strained relationship, and mounting bills. As the congregation stood to greet the Gospel, she remained seated for a moment longer, head bowed. No one noticed her silent prayer; no one heard the trembling words she offered to God. Yet, by the end of the Mass, something within her had changed. Her posture straightened; she joined in the singing, and on her way out, she paused to greet a stranger with a warm smile. What had changed? Outwardly, very little. Inwardly, everything.

This quiet transformation reflects the depth of our spiritual life. The internal journey of prayer and reflection naturally finds expression in outward actions. Thus, prayer is not merely a private exercise or an escape from reality; it is a living encounter with God that transforms the human heart. When the heart is changed, it alters the way a person loves, lives and moves.

Prayer, a Living Relationship with God

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 2558–2758, teaches that prayer is a “vital and personal relationship with the living and true God.” This relationship is not meant to be hidden or inactive. It is like a seed planted in fertile soil; prayer grows and bears fruit. These fruits are visible in the virtues we live by: patience, humility, charity, and forgiveness. People who spend quality time in prayer are gradually shaped into transformed persons; their actions begin to reflect the grace they have received.

Jesus Christ is a perfect example; he often withdrew to solitary places to pray. These moments of communion with the Father were not detached from His mission but deeply connected to it. After prayer, He would go about



preaching, healing and forgiving sinners. This was possible because of His union with the Father. This pattern is both an invitation and a model: what happens in the silence of prayer should animate what happens in the noise of our daily life.

The Church offers practical ways to live out Christ's pattern of prayer leading to action. One such is the Ignatian prayer exercise, 'Examination of Conscience', where we contemplate God's presence and we become aware of our weaknesses and our calling. This awareness fosters conversion, leading us to let go of our sinfulness and turn toward God. Such a conversion cannot remain invisible. It is expressed in the choices we make: choosing kindness over anger, honesty over deceit and generosity over selfishness. However, there will be times when prayer feels dry, and change is invisible. What should one do, give up or continue? One needs to continue to unite oneself with the Lord and draw strength from Him on our lives journey.

Sacraments strengthen the inner transformation.

The Catholic Church has Seven Sacraments, however, the Eucharist and Confession, in particular, help in deepening this transformation. In the Eucharist, we receive Christ Himself, becoming what we receive, i.e., the Body of Christ. This sacred encounter forces us to be Christ's presence in the world. Likewise, in confession, the experience of God's mercy inspires acts of mercy toward others. Hence, the grace received internally seeks expression externally.

However, this kind of transformation is often gradual. Like Mary in the pew, the change may begin silently, almost subtly. Moreover, the first signs of transformation are a softened attitude, readiness to listen, small acts of kindness, etc. Over time, these small changes accumulate, shaping a life that reflects God's love more clearly.

A shared journey

As human beings, we cannot live in isolation. We journey together, not as individuals but interconnected and interdependent. Thus, when one grows in holiness through prayer, the people around that person are also affected. The acts of kindness, compassion, service and justice show the hidden grace at work within the group.

We are living in a world that often focuses on success and results; hence, the hidden work of prayer is insignificant. From experience, we can say that it is this hidden journey that gives meaning and direction to our outward actions. If we are not rooted in God, our actions become empty or self-serving. If we are, then even the smallest action becomes an expression of divine love.

Hence, Mary's story is the story of each one of us; we enter into prayer, burdened and emerge renewed. This silent encounter calls us to living witness. Rooted in God, our transformed hearts shine forth His presence in the way we live, move and share, so that others may encounter Him through us.

(The writer is the Rector of the Basilica of Bom Jesus, Old Goa)

FAITH

THE ANCIENT COMPASS

Fr. Johnny Panamthanam ssp



In a world that changes faster than we can comprehend, many people today live with an unseen restlessness. Technology advances, cultures shift, opinions multiply, and yet the human heart continues to search for direction, meaning, and belonging. We often ask ourselves: *How do we move forward when the path ahead is uncertain?* The answer may not lie in discovering something entirely new, but in rediscovering something ancient — the wisdom of faith that has guided generations before us.

Jesus says in John 15:4, “Abide in me as I abide in you.” These words are not merely an invitation to prayer; they are an invitation to rootedness. A branch disconnected from the vine withers. In the same way, a person disconnected from Christ struggles to remain spiritually alive amidst the storms of life. The roots of a tree are hidden, silent, and often unnoticed, yet they determine the strength and fruitfulness of the tree. So too, our spiritual roots — Scripture, prayer, sacraments, and the traditions of the Church — nourish us inwardly and prepare us to walk faithfully in our daily life.



The disciples on the road to Emmaus understood this truth only after encountering the risen Christ at the breaking of the bread. Their journey was marked by confusion, disappointment, and uncertainty. They walked with heavy hearts, unable to recognize that Jesus Himself was beside them. Though their hearts burned within them as He explained the Scriptures to them, they recognised the risen Lord only when he blessed and broke the bread. Their journey that began in despair ended in renewed purpose. They returned to Jerusalem not as frightened followers, but as transformed witnesses.

The Emmaus story mirrors our own lives today. Many people walk through situations where the road ahead may seem unclear — families facing division, young people wrestling with identity crisis, societies torn apart by conflicts, and individuals burdened by anxiety about the future. Yet Christ still walks beside His people. The Church, through centuries of tradition, becomes the living memory of that companionship. Tradition is not a chain that binds us to the past; it is a compass that keeps us oriented towards truth.

Our ancestors in faith endured persecution, uncertainty, wars, famine, and suffering, yet they remained steadfast in their faith because they trusted in

God's presence and providence. Their witness became the soil from which our faith has taken root and grown. The saints, the martyrs, and the faithful believers before us teach that holiness is possible in every age. Their lives remind us that faith is not merely to be inherited, but be lived, nurtured, and passed on.

In modern times, people often wrongly equate freedom with independence from tradition. Yet a tree without its roots cannot stand for long. The traditions of the Church anchor us strongly in our faith precisely because they connect us to something greater than personal opinion or passing trends. The Eucharist teaches us how to be in communion with one another in a fragmented world. Confession teaches humility in an age of self-justification. Prayer teaches silence in a culture of constant noise. The rosary teaches contemplation in a distracted generation. These ancient practices continue to speak to us because they answer the deepest needs of our human heart.

Tradition also teaches us how to walk together. Faith was never meant to be a solitary journey. The early Christians gathered together, prayed together, suffered together, and rejoiced together. The Emmaus disciples encountered Christ while walking in companionship. Likewise, the Church calls us into communion — to support one another, listen to one another, and journey together towards God.

To be “rooted to walk together” means that our unity does not come from thinking alike on every issue, but from remaining connected to Christ, the true vine. Roots give stability, but they also allow growth. A deeply rooted tree is not afraid of changing seasons because it draws nourishment from beneath the surface. In the same way, Christians can face the uncertainties of the modern world with courage because our faith is grounded in the eternal love of God.

There are moments when the future appears hidden, when prayers seem unanswered, and when the road ahead feels dark. Yet roots grow deepest in unseen places. Faith often matures not in comfort, but in trust. Abraham walked into an unknown land trusting God's promise. Mary said “yes” without fully understanding the path before her. The disciples followed Jesus without knowing where the journey would lead. Their strength came not from certainty about the future, but from confidence in God's faithfulness.

Today, the world needs people who are deeply rooted and courageously compassionate — people who can walk with others through pain, confusion, and hope. We are called not only to preserve tradition, but to live it authentically so that future generations may also find direction. The wisdom of the Church is not outdated; it is timeless because it flows from Christ Himself.

As we continue our own Emmaus journey, may we remember that the ancient compass of faith still points us towards truth, hope, and communion. When we abide in Christ, our roots grow deep enough to withstand every storm of life. And when we walk together in faith, we become living witnesses that even in uncertain times, God continues to guide His people home.

(The writer is the Director of St Pauls Multi-Media, Bandra, Mumbai)

YOUTH:

RADICAL BELONGING: FIND YOUR TRIBE

Percival Holt



In a world of endless scrolling—reels, group chats, binge-watching, online gaming, and virtual hangouts—we are more “connected” than ever before. And yet, something feels missing.

Today, many of us find comfort in digital tribes: social media groups, gaming squads, and online communities we can access while lounging on a bed or a beanbag. These spaces are easy, convenient, and always within reach. But are they enough?

One evening, around 7:30 pm, I saw my brother on his phone the day before an important exam. Curious—and slightly annoyed—I asked, “Aren’t you supposed to be studying?”

“I am,” he replied calmly.

“On your phone?”

“Yes. I’m watching a documentary on Egyptian civilization—it’s part of my syllabus.”

I had no comeback.

A few days later, before a long weekend, I asked a colleague about his plans. “I’ll be playing PUBG with my gang,” he said with a grin.

I smiled—but I couldn’t help noticing the contrast. I had been planning to meet friends, maybe take a short trip, share meals, and simply *be* together. This made me wonder: what does “hanging out” even mean anymore?

Can a screen replace the laughter shared over a packet of chips? The playful arguments, the inside jokes, the sudden plans to go for a walk, or the deep conversations about family, faith, struggles, and dreams?

For me, “belonging” has always meant presence—real people, real moments, real emotions. It’s messy, unpredictable, and sometimes inconvenient. But it’s also deeply life-giving.

And then, one day while reading the Bible, something clicked. I thought about Jesus Christ and His disciples—not as distant figures in stained glass, but as a small, close-knit group walking through life together. They shared meals, told stories, asked questions, laughed, argued, doubted, and believed—side by side.



One story stayed with me: the Road to Emmaus. Two disciples, weighed down by confusion and disappointment, walked together, talking through everything they had experienced. And in that ordinary act of walking and conversing, Jesus drew near. Their hearts burned—not because of a screen or a message—but because of presence, companionship, and shared faith.

That is radical belonging.

It is not just about being connected—it is about being known. It is about walking together, grounded in something deeper than convenience: rooted in faith, in love, and in genuine community.

So how do we find this kind of belonging? It first begins at home, within “the family”, where one finds their first tribe, the first place one belongs to, learns about life, values, beliefs, shares their deepest moments, emotions, vulnerabilities, experiences disappointments & rejections, mostly without any masks or prejudice. But it's important to invest in family too, make time for conversations, memories, activities and build a space of love and honesty.

The next is beyond family and home, in the world outside of home. It doesn't happen instantly. Relationships are an investment. Like any meaningful investment, they require time, patience, and risk. The more you show up, the more they grow.

Start small. Step out. Go to your local park, your school/ college/ workplace, your church, a football ground, or a community space. Notice the familiar faces. Begin with a simple, “Hi, how are you?”

Over time, that “Hi” becomes “Hey, what's up?” and eventually, “Let's hang out.” That's how a tribe begins—not perfectly, but intentionally.

Your tribe will become a space where you can laugh freely, share your burdens, celebrate your wins, and grow together. A place where you learn to love, to forgive, to adjust, and to support one another. A place you can run to when life feels overwhelming.

And yes, it will change. People will move, grow, and sometimes drift away. But that doesn't make it any less real. True belonging evolves—it doesn't disappear.

I've experienced this in my own life through my church community. Over time, people have come and gone—moving cities, starting new chapters—but the sense of belonging remains. The tribe grows, reshapes, and continues. Because when our belonging is rooted in Christ, it is never fragile. It becomes something deeper than circumstance. It becomes a friendship, fellowship and a family.

So, here's the invitation: Step beyond the screen.
Choose presence over convenience.

And find your tribe—not just to pass time, but to walk through life together. That is radical belonging.

(The writer is the Head & Faculty, Gunvatta Gurukul, Quality Council of India, Advisor, CCBI Youth Commission, Delhi NCR)

FORMATION

**ROOTED IN FAITH,
WALKING TOGETHER IN FORMATION***Sr. Loretta Pereira sfn*

Rootedness in faith is not merely a spiritual idea; it is a lived experience that shapes the way we think, act, and journey with others. To be rooted means to be firmly grounded, nourished, and sustained by something deeper than passing emotions or changing circumstances. In the context of faith formation, rootedness becomes the foundation upon which individuals and communities grow, mature, and move forward together with purpose and direction.

A tree that is deeply rooted can withstand storms, strong winds, and seasons of drought. Similarly, a person who is rooted in faith remains steady amidst life's uncertainties. Faith rooted in God gives us identity, stability, and hope. It reminds us that we are not alone, that our lives have meaning, and that we are constantly being guided by a loving presence. Without this rootedness, our journey of formation becomes fragile, easily shaken by doubts, distractions, and challenges.

Formation, in its truest sense, is a continuous process of becoming. It is not limited to acquiring knowledge but involves transformation of the heart, mind, and spirit. When rooted in faith, formation becomes holistic. It shapes not only what we believe but how we live. It calls us to grow in love, humility, service, and commitment. Rootedness gives formation its depth, ensuring that growth is not superficial but deeply anchored in values and convictions.

To “walk together” is a beautiful expression of community and shared journey. Faith is never meant to be lived in isolation. Rootedness in faith naturally leads us into communion with others. As we grow in our relationship with God, we become more open to walking alongside others supporting, encouraging, and learning from one another. Formation, therefore, is not an individual task but a communal experience. It invites us to journey together, respecting each person's pace and story while moving towards a common goal.



Walking together also requires patience and understanding. Each person is at a different stage of their faith journey. Some may feel strong and confident, while others may be searching or struggling. Rootedness teaches us to be compassionate and accepting. Just as roots intertwine beneath the soil, unseen yet connected, our faith journeys are also interconnected. We draw strength from one another, and in doing so, we grow as a community.

In the process of formation, rootedness in faith provides clarity of purpose. It helps us discern the direction of our lives and the choices we make. When we are rooted, we are less likely to be swayed by external pressures or temporary trends. Instead, we remain focused on what truly matters living a life of meaning, service, and love. This clarity enables us to walk together with intention, knowing that our journey is guided by a shared vision.

Moreover, rootedness nurtures resilience. Formation is not always easy; it involves challenges, self-reflection, and sometimes painful growth. There are moments of doubt, failure, and questioning. However, when our faith is deeply rooted, we find the strength to persevere. We learn to trust the process, believing that every experience contributes to our growth. Rootedness reassures us that even in difficult times, we are being shaped and formed for a greater purpose.

Another important aspect of rootedness is nourishment. Just as roots draw nutrients from the soil, our faith needs constant nourishment through prayer, reflection, and engagement with the Word of God. These practices deepen our relationship with God and sustain us on our journey. Formation programs, spiritual guidance, and community interactions become channels through which this nourishment flows. They help us remain connected to our source and continue growing.

Walking together in formation also calls us to be witnesses. A life rooted in faith naturally bears fruit acts of kindness, compassion, justice, and service. These fruits become visible signs of our inner transformation. As we walk together, we inspire one another to live authentically and faithfully. Our shared journey becomes a testimony of God's presence and action in our lives.

In today's fast paced world, where distractions are many and values often seem uncertain, the need for rootedness in faith is more important than ever. It anchors us, guides us, and unites us. It transforms formation from a mere process into a meaningful journey of growth and communion.

In conclusion, to be rooted in faith is to be grounded in love, strengthened by hope, and guided by purpose. It enables us to walk together not as isolated individuals, but as a community of believers growing in unity and understanding. Through the lens of formation, rootedness becomes the foundation of our journey, shaping us into people who are not only deeply connected to God but also committed to walking with others in faith, love, and shared purpose.

PASTORAL:

THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT

Sr. Hilda Lopes sfn



Throughout the year we experience different seasons and the monsoons, the rainy season has many lessons to teach us. The lightening, thundering, rain, breeze and the fear of uprooting of trees. A few trees fall, many don't. The difference isn't the storm. It's what we can't see. The trees that stand have roots driven deep into the soil. Mostly, trees that are alone fall. Others stand because their roots are entangled with the forest around them. Accompaniment is being that forest. Not the wind that tries to push the tree upright. Just roots, nearby. Entangled. Holding.

Accompaniment at the Emmaus Road: Walking together with Christ

We all know what happened at the Emmaus Road. The two disciples are walking away from Jerusalem. And then Jesus shows up. But notice what Jesus does not do first.



1. *He does not start with answers. He starts with nearness.* Lk. 24:15
No introduction just walks with them.
Accompaniment rule 1: you cannot accompany from distance.
To accompany is to walk together.
2. *He does not accuse. He asks.* Lk. 24:17
They share the whole story. Jesus does not interrupt them.
Accompaniment rule 2: Listen until their story is finished.
Listen to people. They don't need your verse. They need your ears.
3. *He does not stay safe. He breaks open Scripture after He breaks open their hearts.*
He listens to them for 7 miles and then He speaks and when He talked to them their hearts were burning.
Accompaniment rule 3: Truth lands only in soil that has been walked on.
Accompaniment prepares the heart so that when truth comes, it feels like warmth, not a weapon.
4. *He does not force Himself. He waits to be invited.* Lk. 24:28
Jesus never pushes into a life. He walks, listens, teaches... then waits.

Accompaniment rule 4: Your presence must be chosen, not imposed.

Real accompaniment respects freedom. Walk with love but not to control.

The art of accompaniment is simple, but not easy: draw near. Walk slow. Listen long. Speak truth. Wait to be invited. Break bread. And trust that in walking, hearts will burn again.

On Emmaus Road Jesus walked slowly. We too must learn that art: To accompany means to be human on the human road.

In order to accompany others in our mission/ministry, we need to first be accompanied by Christ myself. The mistake we make in our ministry is we try to give what we don't have. We walk Emmaus Road with people, but our own hearts aren't burning. We try to entangle roots, but we are running on spiritual fumes.

Just as deeper the roots stronger the tree, so also in order to accompany Christ, I need to be rooted in Christ, I need to be in Christ. To be 'in Christ' I need to:

1. Pray: Spend time in prayer daily. Sit with Him 10mins like your friend. No words needed.
2. Scripture: Read the bible daily. Let at least one verse master you daily.
3. Eucharist: Take part in the Holy Eucharist daily and receive Jesus daily in your hearts.
4. Confession: Helps us to abide in Christ.

When I am in Christ I will be able to accompany others in following ways:

1. Draw near - Enter their road, not yours: People don't need you to be impressive. They need you to be present.
2. Listen long - let them empty their jar: Hold space until their whole story is over. Most people are never fully heard.
3. Speak the truth: Truth without relationship feels like judgment.
4. Stay only if invited - respect their freedom: accompaniment that controls is not love.
5. Break bread – Point them to Christ, not you: Your goal is not dependence on you. Its encounter with Him.

Once I am rooted in Christ, I can truly accompany people in my mission. Abiding in Him daily through prayer, Word and Eucharist, makes my heart His home. From this place, I walk Emmaus roads with others. I draw near people without an agenda, listening long before speaking. Rooted first, I become shade, bread and hope, letting Jesus meet them through me. When life's storms come, the tree with strong roots stands. If you're strong in Christ, you too will stand. For branches that abide will bear fruits.

(The writer is the Manager at St. Theresa High School, St. Estevam, Goa)

III. THE EXPANSION (THE TOGETHERNESS)

FAMILY:

FROM HOME TO THE HUMAN FAMILY: SHARING LOVE, HOPE, VISION

Dr. John Dayal



There would be no Christians in the world today if those who first heard of Jesus of Nazareth had kept the Word to themselves. They took it home. They mulled it over at the table, with spouse and children, with elders who had seen more of life and carried the memory of other faiths — Greek, Roman, Celtic, or the desert traditions of North Africa. The earliest Church was not built in the synagogue or the public square alone, but in the household where families trying to understand what this man on the Cross meant for their lives.

I was reminded of those first Christians on a recent visit to villages deep in the forests of Chhattisgarh and Odisha with Harsh Mander, an IAS officer who quit to work in human rights. We met first-generation Christians, living in the face of severe and rampant persecution, with no institution to fall back upon, no legal shield worth the paper it is printed on. They have only themselves — and each other. The family, the extended community of faith, is their only refuge. And it holds.



Faith is not a private possession. It is a living root meant to nourish a shared journey. When Jesus said, “Abide in me,” he was not calling his disciples away from the world. He was calling them to draw life from him so they might walk more faithfully within it, with one another, across the distances that age and generation so often place between us.

A tree does not boast about its roots which are hidden, working silently — holding soil, drawing water, sustaining life when winds rise and seasons change. So, it is with Christian faith. The deepest things are often unseen:

prayer, memory, Scripture, repentance, forgiveness, the quiet witness of those who walked before us. These roots are not meant to be hoarded by one generation. They are meant to be handed on.

The great theme of walking together holds two movements in tension, abiding in Christ, remaining in his love, receiving his life and listening together, learning together. “Apart from me,” he says, “you can do nothing.”

Many elders in our homes and congregations have carried faith through poverty, illness, displacement, and sustained uncertainty. They may not always speak the language of this moment, but their lives contain a deep theology that no seminary has bottled.

The young, however, must not be treated merely as an audience for the past. They are bearers of God's future. They ask questions the older generation may have spent a lifetime avoiding. They see hypocrisy quickly. They are troubled by injustice, by loneliness, by unemployment, by the hollowness of a world that offers connection without meaning.

The road to Emmaus illuminates this shared journey. Two disciples walked away from Jerusalem with broken hopes. Jesus came and walked with them — and they did not recognise him. At the table, in the breaking of bread, their eyes were opened. This is how Christ still walks with his people. He does not always arrive first as an answer. Sometimes he until the right moment.

Families and churches need Emmaus spaces — places where the young may speak honestly and the old may share without being dismissed, where the Word burns again in shared hearts.

Too often the Church organises programmes but neglects relationships. We speak about family but do not create spaces for intergenerational listening. We honour elders in public and ignore their loneliness in private. We celebrate youth on special days and do not trust them with responsibility the rest of the year.

A rooted Church will care for both memory and imagination. It will honour grandparents as witnesses, allow parents to admit their struggles, and give the young meaningful roles in prayer, worship, and the decisions that shape congregational life.

Elders bring depth. Youth bring fresh courage. Christ brings life. And when we walk together, we may discover — as the disciples did on the road to Emmaus, and discover every time I am in the forest or the village — that he has been walking with us all along.

(The writer is an Indian Journalist, author and human rights and Christian activist)

WOMEN:

ARCHITECTS OF THE WAY

Sr. Prudencia Vaz dhm



“Women is the foundational backbone for families, economies and societies sustaining the roots of the community”

The idiom often phrased as “her brains are in her knees” is a very stereotypical, provoking statement, demeaning the dignity of women in society. This often disturbed me in my apostolate when I was working with the women and children in the rural villages in Bagalkot district. But then as I began my ministry among the poor Dalit community, living with the people, and closely walking and working with them and for the development of their community, especially the women, I strongly and fully negate the baseless and valueless dehumanising and underestimation of the preciousness of a woman.

I worked in thirteen villages in Mudhol Taluka for almost a decade of laborious and yet enriching and fruitful years which only helped me build my own convictions. It also sustained my faith and helped me to stand with the women and for them, almost proving the society wrong in



its baseless judgments against women. As I see the rural women, I just simply admire each of them; their beauty, their compassion, love, commitment, immense capacity for forbearance, tolerance, patience, forgiveness, endurance, and their enthusiasm and zeal to start all over again.

Women in their homes spend disproportionately more time (often 2.5 times more than men) on daily tasks such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water, caring for children and looking after the elderly. It is the women who often take the lead in building the community, checking on neighbours, organising local events, and maintaining the relationships that hold the community together.

Women as the invisible infrastructure of community, refers to the massive volume of unpaid, underpaid and undervalued labour – primarily care giving, household management and social networking as she is the

foundational backbone for families, economies and societies to function. This labour is “invisible” because it is often overlooked in official statistics (like GDP) and more so in policy making she is often unpaid career work:

Even though most of the women with whom I closely walked and worked, were illiterate and yet they were very witty and enthusiastic about life and building community irrespective of age. It was mere acceptance of them as individuals and recognizing their inbuilt God given potentials that came forward especially through the Self-Help Groups. Initially they tested me to the core but once I gained their trust and won their confidence by being with them in their thick and thin times, going at their space, only motivating and encouraging them to come out, conscientise them about their self-worth and dignity and that they are full of resources which they can not only use to build themselves and their families, but also sustain the entire community, making their voices heard in the society. They came forward, and today they even take their issues to Panchayat levels, involved in decision making policies, being part of the school bodies, enjoying leadership at local taluka level. Addressing local issues, the self-help groups have created in them financial independence, which has shifted power dynamics within the households empowering the women to move from passive aid recipients to active participants in local governance.

The women act as the catalyst and agents of change in the society. Many of the women raise issues at local Panchayat and even at district level, prioritising social issues like child marriages, promoting girl child education, sanitisation by availing the government schemes of household toilets, minimising the open defecation, etc. Thus, women often form the backbone of the “invisible infrastructure” in communities. Because their work is not recognised as professional or formal, women are often excluded from policy consultations and decision making about community development.

In conclusion, I say that it is really heartwarming to see these poor women whose lives are very inspiring, teach the values of tolerance, forgiveness, patience, self-control, particularly when dealing with difficult situations or provocation, when they have every right to retaliate and show their anger. But they choose to be more kind and loving. In fact, I see these women not as poor, but very rich because they are really blessed with plentiful God given potentials and they are making use of each of them to the utmost capacity which only makes their living very meaningful and inspiring and exemplary. Women are the one who walk the paths of life, deeply rooted in God- centered values irrespective of religion, but based on the greater value of Love.

(The writer is the member of Daughters of the Heart of Mary and a social worker)

HEALTH CARE

HYPERTHERMIA*Dr. Sneha Dhargalkar*

Hyperthermia - is a medical condition where internal body temperature is higher than normal. this generally means temperature is higher than 98.6°F or 37°C.

Normally human body has safe guards in place to cool down when it gets too hot. Such as sweat glands produce sweat that evaporates from skin, lowering body temperature, before it can get to dangerous levels.

But when weather is too hot and humid or body produces so much internal heat that natural cooldown system gets overwhelmed. This is when body fails to manage temperature naturally which leads to Heat Related illnesses.

**Types of Heat - Related illnesses**

1. Heat Rash - The mildest form of heat illness caused by blocked sweat ducts.
2. Heat cramps - Also known as exercise associated muscle cramps. Caused by excessive sweating and when exerting too much in heat.
3. Heat exhaustion - A moderate stage of dehydration that occurs when body loses too much water or salt when exerting in the heat. If not reversed within 30 min it can progress to heat stroke.
4. Heat stroke - This is a life-threatening heat illness where the body's temperature regulation completely fails. Internal body temperature goes above 40°C or higher. It occurs from doing Physical activity in the heat or simply from being in a hot environment for too long.

Symptoms and causes

1. Heat Rash: Appears as group of small, pimple-like bumps. Skin feels itchy or prickly. Forms in folds of skin
3. Heat cramps: Slow, painful tightening of muscles. Begins during Physical activity or soon after. common in legs, arms or belly

3. Heat Exhaustion: Dizziness, Heavy sweating, Nausea or vomiting, cool Headache, extreme weakness, rapid pulse and cool pale skin.
4. Heat stroke: Behaviour Changes, Blurred vision, slurred speech, Dizziness, rapid breathing, confusion, red or dry skin and loss of consciousness.

Management: Reducing body heat naturally involves a combination of hydration, diet and lifestyle adjustment. For persistent or Severe heat-related symptoms, seeking medical advice is crucial.

Heat Rash / Cramps

Keeping skin cool and dry. Wearing loose clothing. Limit time in the heat. Use anti-itch creams. Avoid moisturizers. Drink water or electrolyte beverages. Avoid caffeine and Alcohol. Eat water rich foods. Take a cold or lukewarm shower. Avoid heavy workouts during peak heat.

Heat exhaustion:

Move to cool place. Remove unnecessary clothing. Apply cold compresses. lie down with your legs elevated. slowly sip cold water. Call emergency services if progress to heat stroke.

Heat stroke

- this is a medical emergency, Seek immediate medical attention. Person needs to help by moving out of the heat and using any available means to cool down.
- Avoid drinking any fluids you may inhale them which is dangerous.
- Need care at a hospital which include rapid body cooling and supportive treatment for organs.

Prevention:

- Limiting physical activity
- Wearing loose-fitting, breathable clothing.
- Staying hydrated whether you are active or not
- Keeping your surrounding cool comfortable temperature
- Taking a cool shower after time in the heat.

(The writer is a Physiotherapist and consultant at Fr. Faustino physiotherapy clinic, Sancoale, Goa.)

GLOBAL

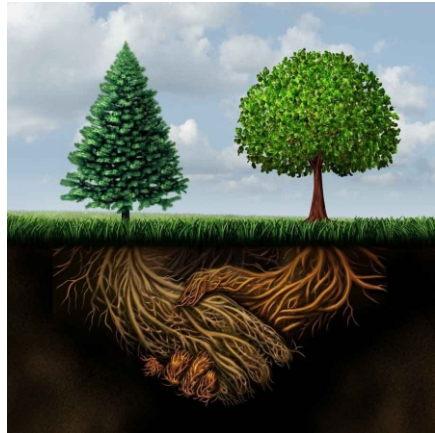
NO BORDERS FOR THE ROOTED: ONE SOIL, MANY BRANCHES

Bro Senbern Fernandes OFM cap



Our world is divided on the basis of culture, colour, language, ethnicity, nationality and ideology. These are some of the borders that we can see but there are many borders that we cannot see. There are some borders that exist in our hearts. Sometimes we stay only with people who think like us, look like us, or make us comfortable. Jesus says, “Abide in me.” Jesus invites us to remain connected: connected to Him, to one another and to the world. And when all branches are connected to the same source Jesus Christ, they also become connected to one another. And that is the beauty of being rooted in Christ, the deeper our roots go, the stronger is our connection to one another and the smaller our borders become.

Look at a tree. There are many branches but every branch grows from the same soil, receives the same nourishment, but stretches in different directions. Some branches are long, others strong, some are bent, some bloom quickly, and others take time. Despite this together they make one complete and healthy tree. The community works in a similar way.



We often think that unity means becoming the same, getting rid of our differences or having the same common expression. But that is not the case, true unity does not mean uniformity. Look at a choir in the Church, it is beautiful not because every voice that we hear sounds identical, but because different voices come together in harmony. The Church too is meant to be like people coming from different places, having different personalities, struggles, and stories, walking together and helping one another to reach to Christ. The story of Emmaus is a perfect example that reminds us of this

journey. The two disciples were confused and disappointed after the death of Jesus. While they were walking away in sadness, Jesus comes and walks with them. He does not force them, judge them, or immediately correct them. He allows them to speak, He listens, He enters into their world, He shares their road before revealing Himself. This is what our world needs today: people who are willing to walk with others, listen to them, know what they go through before trying to change them.

Encounter is the foundation of a community. A perfect agreement cannot make a community. Sometimes we are so busy defending our opinions or even imposing our worldview on others that we forget how to listen. We must not forget that Jesus Himself chose the road of encounter. He sat with sinners and outcasts, and crossed every social border of His time. Genuine Love always moves outward because Love is other oriented.

We live at a time when the whole world has become a global village. We are connected to each other like never before. This connection is digital! Despite such advances loneliness remains, we can be popular online but unseen, unnoticed in real life. We have a voice to speak but do we have an ear to listen? In a world like this, what we need is friendship, dialogue, and understanding. These values can help us to become witnesses of the Gospel. Being rooted in Christ gives us the courage to cross ourselves, cross borders. When our identity is secure in Him, we no longer feel threatened by differences that separate us, instead, we begin to see and cherish diversity as a gift. Another culture becomes something to admire, something to learn from. Another person's story becomes an opportunity for encounter, and not judgment.

The early Christian community flourished because people were able to experience a new kind of togetherness: rich and poor shared meals together, strangers became family members. Differences were there, but love among them was greater than their differences. That call is still relevant, we are invited to build communities where everyone feels welcomed, valued and more so loved.

“Rooted cannot confine themselves with borders!” When we truly remain rooted in Christ, we automatically get connected to one another. This can help us to build communities where diversity is not merely tolerated but celebrated. This enables us to walk together even when our journeys look different. The world changes not when everyone becomes the same (uniform), but when people learn to belong to one another despite their differences. After all, one tree can have many branches and yet still, it remains one.

(The writer is a deacon belonging to Capuchin Province of Goa)

IV. THE STEWARDSHIP (THE COMMON GROUND)

CARE FOR CREATION:

THE WOOD-WIDE WEB

Ms. Mabel Menezes



On the road to Emmaus, Jesus was there but unseen until the bread was broken. Same with Wood wide web. The network is always there unseen but this massive, intelligent conversation happening underground that we walk over daily without noticing. Once you “recognise” it, the forest stops being a bunch of separate trees and becomes one living community. Walking in nature teaches lots of life lesson, we should listen to nature, and eventually care deeply. Beneath every forest floor there is a hidden gospel. Miles of mycorrhizal fungi threads through soil, linking roots to roots forming the " Wood- wide Web". It is not just growth it connects to the parable.

He listens through creation: The disciples poured out their confusion to Jesus. Nature pours out God's glory to us if we slow down enough to hear. The whisper of leaves, the pattern in a spider's web, the resilience of a seedling, all of it speaks without words. Underground fungal network the Mycorrhizal fungi attach to 90% of plant roots. Their thin threads, called hyphae, spread for miles. This is a trade, trees give fungi sugars from photosynthesis whereas fungi give trees water, phosphorus, nitrogen, and other nutrients they cannot reach alone. Nothing stands alone just like none of us walks alone. Everything is interdependent the micro-organisms and microscopic fungi feeding on any huge trees, the tiny bees depending on flowers and us depending on other organisms is a huge web. As we walk in nature we need to ask and listen so that we can understand the network of all creation. When we walk, we are not just on one preside track but we are in company with Jesus and God's creations to see the world through his eyes. Where every tiniest part of creation matters to the core of Creation.

Interdependence is survival in wood wide web. A lone tree, cut off from the network, struggles. But plugged into the fungal web, it both gives and receives. Old "mother trees" send carbon to shaded saplings. Dying trees



dump nutrients to neighbours. When one is attacked by pests, warning signals ripple underground to the rest. Sacred groves in Goa is such example, Devrai stay lush because these networks make the whole grove resilient, if one tree is cut, the network weakens.

We were never meant to be spiritual islands, but with a community holding all things in common. Our faith survives when it is shared. Your prayer steadies me. My resources feed you. The pain of one becomes the prayer of all. Cut off from the Body, we wither. Connected, we endure droughts together. Rootedness enables movement. The network only works because each tree is deeply rooted. Roots don't wander. They go down, anchor, and stay deep. Only then can the tree "walk together" with the forest in all seasons.

So with us. Rootedness in Christ isn't about staying still. It's what makes authentic movement possible. When we are rooted in prayer, Scripture, sacraments, we can actually walk with others without losing ourselves. We don't join the journey to be swept away. We join it to carry strength. Colossians 2:6-7: "Rooted and built up in him... walk in him." Rooted, then walking.

How can our action help us to be rooted in nature web?

In *Laudato si*, Pope Francis tells us on care for environment and explains the relationship between God, Human and Earth.

Some of the actions each one can take, to care for our common home:

1. Composting kitchen waste- feeds soil microbes that feed the fungi that feed the trees that cool your area.
2. Choosing to walk- instead of drive on a short errand means one less pulse of heat over the roots lining your road.
3. Teaching a child- to name the birds at a lake. Teaching them the wonderful nature so that they'll defend it later.
4. Listening to nature. Jesus on the Emmaus Road shows the same principle. He walked with two. Not a crowd. Not a nation. Two discouraged people. Yet that small act of presence became resurrection faith for the Church. The network starts with one conversation, one step together.

Walking with nature = walking with each other = walking with Christ. So today, when we step into nature, we're not escaping. We're entering the cathedral where God's sermon on community is already being preached underground.

Let your feet be rooted in gratitude. Let your walk be slow enough to listen — to the creek, to the morning song of Asian koel, to the friend beside you. Because care for creation and care for each other are the same thread. The fungi knew it first. At the core we all belong to one body. One web. One walk.

(The writer is a member of the Goa Bird Conservation Network and Diocesan commission for Ecology)

SOCIAL:

ROOTED TO WALK TOGETHER: AN EMMAUS JOURNEY OF JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY

Sr. Sujata Jena ss.cc.



The Emmaus journey of the risen Jesus captures the faith and mission experience of the Christian community. It is a journey of **encounter, recognition, transformation, and mission**. The two disciples walk away from Jerusalem carrying disappointment, confusion, and hopelessness. Yet, in the midst of their brokenness, the risen Christ walks with them. Their hearts begin to burn within them as they listen to him, and finally, in the breaking of the bread, they recognize his presence. But the encounter does not end in personal consolation. Immediately, they return to Jerusalem—the very place they were fleeing. Transformed by their encounter with the risen Lord, they become witnesses to the Resurrection and proclaim the Good News to others.

For me, this Emmaus experience has become a living framework for embodying faith in Christ and participating in His mission of love, justice, and equality. To be rooted in Christ is to walk alongside the wounded and excluded, refusing to take a detour around human suffering.



In the Indian context, injustice is deeply embedded within social, political, economic, and even religious structures. The burden of this unjust cross continues to fall disproportionately upon the poor, migrants, Dalits, tribals, women, minorities, and other vulnerable communities. Often injustice is not simply the result of individual wrongdoing but is sustained structurally through power, corruption, silence, and social hierarchy. Therefore, the response to injustice cannot remain at the level of individual charity alone. It demands collective responsibility, structural transformation, and a spirituality rooted in solidarity.

I do consider Faith or Faith-Response is a Praxis of Solidarity to restore Justice. My faith cum social involvement extends to direct intervention in situations of injustice: advocating for nuns falsely accused of trafficking and forced conversion, questioning unlawful detention, and confronting misuse of authority—even when it led to late-night police interrogation. I have been involved in efforts to rescue bonded labourers and trafficked persons, including minors, often under threat from powerful actors. During the COVID-19 crisis, I accompanied migrant families facing hunger, displacement, wage theft,

workplace deaths, and sexual exploitation, facilitating access to food, transport, and basic dignity.

Equally vital is long-term community empowerment. I have worked closely with Dalit and tribal youth, mentoring and mobilising resources to enable their access to civil services. A significant outcome of this engagement was the success of Priyanka Pradhan, a young Adivasi woman from Rayagada, who cleared the Odisha Public Service Commission examination in 2025—an example of how sustained accompaniment can disrupt structural marginalization. My engagement with Dalit and tribal women across rural West Bengal has focused on leadership formation, financial literacy, and livelihood generation, enabling them to become agents of change who claim their rights and entitlements.

Remaining connected to grassroots realities is central to this praxis. With a network of thousands—primarily among the poor and migrants—I continue to respond to calls for assistance in accessing justice, rights, and basic services. As an active member of civil society movements advocating for the rights to food, work, and dignity, and as part of fact-finding teams investigating targeted violence and caste-based discrimination, my work seeks not only to respond to injustice but to transform the structures that sustain it.

Taken collectively my involvement in the crusade for justice in favour of the marginalised communities, I have consistently amplified the voices of the poor, migrants, Dalits, tribals, minorities, women, children, and other vulnerable communities through journalism in both Catholic and secular national and international platforms. Some of my reporting on violence against Christians in Odisha has entered parliamentary discourse, reflecting the potential of truth-telling to challenge dominant narratives and structures.

Beyond writing, my praxis includes public speaking, participation in consultations, and organizing demonstrations that demand accountability and justice at local and national levels. I have raised critical concerns within the Church itself—addressing gender discrimination, clericalism, and the need for synodality—recognizing that structural injustice must be challenged both in society and within ecclesial spaces. Such engagement has not been without cost; speaking truth has often been met with resistance, scrutiny, and even intimidation, yet it remains integral to a faith committed to justice.

Rooted to Walk Together: An Emmaus Journey of Justice and Solidarity calls us to understand faith not as an individual pursuit but a collective and participatory praxis that embodies solidarity, challenges systemic injustice, and works toward a society where dignity and justice become lived realities. The architecture of justice is not built through power or ideology alone, but through encounter, accompaniment, shared bread, courageous truth, and collective responsibility—built whenever people choose solidarity over indifference and dignity over exclusion. To walk together in faith is to ensure that no one is left to walk alone.

(The writer is a freelance journalist, and an advocate with a specific cause of the poor, Dalits, Tribals, women, children, minorities, migrants)

COMMUNICATION:

DIALOGUE AS A DESTINATION: CULTIVATING A LANGUAGE OF RESPECT IN A DIGITAL WORLD*Sr. Soniya K. Chacko dc***Dialogue in Digital World**

Dialogue has a rootedness as old as creation itself, and it is a creation in its own right. Dialogue builds relationships and fosters mutual understanding. Today, dialogue holds even greater value and importance; it is a source of direction, the strength of any relationship, and the lifeblood of any institution. As we walked together, reflecting on a Synodal Church, we recognized that dialogue is essential. "By walking together and reflecting on the journey made, the Church will be able to learn from what it experiences, which processes can help it to live in communion, achieve participation, and open itself to mission," said Pope Francis at the launch of the synod process in 2021.

**Three Dimensions of the Synodal Church in This Digital Era**

Dialogue in the Church: The Church must open herself to listen to the people of God. Both young and old have much to say and much to hear. They seek answers to their doubts, concerns, and problems. We need to guide them to the Holy Sacraments and to the Holy Scriptures. Since our society spends a lot of time on digital platforms, it is time for us to establish a digital cell in every diocese, where we can provide information, counselling, advice, awareness programs, and even adult faith formation programs.

Listening Together to the Word of God in Sacred Scripture: Every problem humanity faces has an answer in the Holy Scriptures. This will help us remain rooted in Christ and encounter Him in the Scriptures, Sacraments, and daily events of our lives. "Abide in my love" (John 15:9)

invites us to deepen our relationship with the Lord, which can only be fulfilled through a strong connection with Him in the Holy Scripture. The Word of the Lord is active and alive, shared by many Scripture scholars, retreat preachers, and young digital missionaries. The Lord invites us to creatively share His Word on digital platforms. As we journey together, it is our responsibility to ensure that our neighbour, friend, or follower on social media is inspired by the Lord. Am I making any effort to touch the lives of others through my witnessing words, hymns, videos, activities, or simply by the way I live?

To listen to one another, especially those in the margins, as we discern the signs of the times: responding to the Church's call to become digital missionaries, as articulated by Pope Leo in July 2025. This is the mission of the Church: to proclaim peace to the world! Our online encounters should inspire hope and peace. In essence, we are called to be artisans of peace and hope. This is also an invitation to be Christ to those experiencing loneliness created by the digital realm. We must strive to be more human. By creating a network of compassion, we can offer healing and the gentle touch of peace and care to those in need. The Holy Father writes, "We have a duty to work together to develop a way of thinking and a language for our time that gives voice to Love." It is not merely about generating content; it is about fostering encounters of the heart.

Conclusion

We navigate the vast digital landscape where many suffer from relational poverty. Our mission to mend hearts and lives is the essence of Dialogue in the Digital World. I conclude with the words of Pope Leo XIV addressed to Catholic Digital Missionaries and Influencers on July 29, 2025: "Networks of relationships, of love, of gratuitous sharing, where friendship is profound and authentic; networks where we can heal what has been broken and overcome loneliness, focusing not on the number of followers but on experiencing the greatness of infinite Love in every encounter; networks that prioritize others over ourselves, where no 'bubble' can silence the voices of the weakest; networks that liberate and save; networks that help us rediscover the beauty of looking into each other's eyes; networks of truth. In this way, every story of shared goodness will become a knot in a single, immense network: the network of networks, the network of God."

(The writer is a digital evangelist and a member of Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul)



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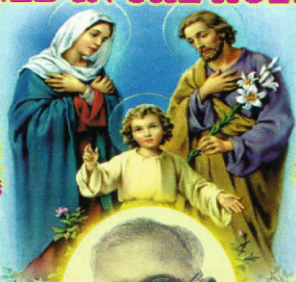
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