

April 2023
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green

God's call to Renew and Energise Earth & Nature



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Bishop Allwyn D'Silva

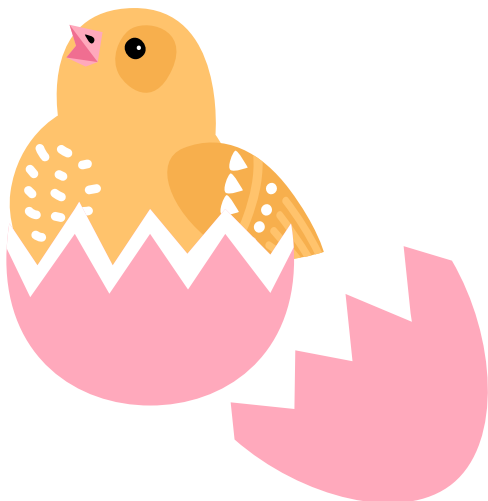
Bishop In-Charge

Archdiocesan Office for Environment

Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay

Chairperson – Office for Environment &
Climate Change
Catholic Bishops' Conference of India

We live in times in great uncertainty. Earlier this year, it was India's hottest ever February in the past 122 years, there has been unseasonal rain and crop damage, and meteorological experts have forecasted a normal to below normal monsoon. I just read a horrifying news article that reported 3 million litres of water for Mumbai went down a drain every day for five months following damage to a water supply tunnel in November 2022. COVID-19 cases are on the rise again. We find our lives and circumstances may be tinged with despair, dullness, death, disease, destruction and deterioration. Perhaps, our zeal for our ecological ministry has been floundering.



And yet, hope abounds all around us. A closer look at a tree in the compound reveals baby birds breaking out of their eggs – their parents foraging constantly for food to sustain new life.

Despite the heat, tiny shoots emerge from the soil – urging us to water these delicate sprouts. Along our fragile coasts and supported by conservation efforts, newly hatched turtle babies have been making their way back to the sea. The darkness of the night is always followed by the light of dawn, particularly striking is the sun rising over snow-capped Himalayan peaks. The confines of the grave can never contain the magnificence of the resurrection!

When Jesus' empty tomb was discovered, people were flummoxed. The disciples and the authorities thought the other party to be at fault for the disappearance of his body. The risen Jesus was ultimately encountered only by a select few of his followers. But even those few encounters filled believers with enough hope to ensure that evangelisation continues well over 2000 years later! The great feast of Easter reminds us that through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are “born again to a living hope” (1 Peter 1:3). The ecological situation is undoubtedly dire, but in our risen Lord we discover the reassurance of new life. In this Easter season, therefore, let us revive our commitment to care for creation and do our part to let nature flourish. May we all take actions and steps to rejuvenate the earth.

Earth Day (22nd April) 2023 continues with the theme “Invest in Our Planet” – some ways to do so are [here](#); while the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the final instalment of its Sixth Assessment Report in March – read a critique [here](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Easter is a time of wonder and awe. We may constantly highlight the gravity of the planetary crisis, but during Easter we look to the risen Jesus to focus on the miracle of life.

Let's imagine the wonder of the Resurrection. The Gospels tell us that our Lord's body was prepared and placed in a new tomb with a large stone sealing its opening. Then we have accounts of an open and empty tomb with burial cloths neatly folded, guards asleep, the authorities fretting over "grave robbing", distraught followers. To only two women does an angel proclaim, "He is not here, for he has risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6). They soon encounter and worship Jesus, who instructs them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee (Matthew 28:9-10). However, of the moment of the Resurrection itself – the glorious moment of the victory of Jesus over sin and death, his transition to new life – we don't know. Possibly, we cannot even truly comprehend. But what we do know are our instructions – to believe, to hope, to not be afraid, to proclaim.

With the Resurrection comes revival and rejuvenation. Thus, this issue, we feature your initiatives of revival – your sustained recycling works, your giving new life to second-hand items, your care of trees, your green Easter experience. We have an article on climate change education and another on hope in a naturalistic world. We have poems on trees and roses and a special prayer titled: *The Tree of Life*.

We hope this issue reignites our wonder and awe of the world around us – nature and all life forms lovingly created, enlivened and sustained by the Word of God, the Breath of the Spirit and redeemed by Jesus. May we believe in our capacity for revival, hope in the new life Easter brings, fear not the ecological challenge before us, and proclaim our care for creation. Let us rejuvenate ourselves, revive our efforts that have been flagging, sustain and intensify our ecological stewardship. May we mark this Easter season with hope, revival and rejuvenation.

While we emphasise awe and wonder, let us not forget gratitude. We are immensely thankful for the living hope that Easter brings us and the abundant blessings God showers on us. We are also grateful to our Bishop-in-Charge who steers our ministry at the Archdiocesan Office for Environment (AOE). Bishop Allwyn D'Silva celebrates his 75th birthday on 20th April – the AOE team sends him greetings and goodwill: A very happy birthday Bishop Allwyn, thank you for your monumental and pioneering work in our humble vineyard and may *"the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace"* always!

The Editorial Team

Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ

Head, Archdiocesan Office for Environment

Naomi Gonsalves

Shawna Nemesia Rebello



AOE DIARY

- We had an online consultation with over thirty persons on 16th January as part of planning for future activities of the AOE
- Nineteen persons from nine parishes received their certificates from Bishop Allwyn D'Silva at the valedictory session of Certificate Course for Eco Ambassadors – 2022 on 5th February at the Loyola Hall of St Peter's Church, Bandra West
- We prepared an [Ecological Way of the Cross](#) on the request of the Commission for Liturgy of the Archdiocese of Bombay



- The AOE participated in an online consultation organised by the CBCI Office for Environment and Climate Change on 16th February
- Fr Luke conducted a session on *Liturgy and the Environment* at the valedictory ceremony of the Advanced Liturgy Course on 12th March at the Daughters of St Paul Convent, Bandra
- Fr Luke mentored Snehlata Alphonso and George D'Mello in their ecological ministry during the Institute for Ministry of Faith Enrichment (IMFE) course – the graduation ceremony was held in Dadar on 19th March

- Fr Luke gave an online session on *Cosmic Spirituality* to the Karnataka Province of the Apostolic Carmel Sisters on 20th March
- The AOE participated in a reflection of the Social Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Bombay on 22nd March at Ashakiran, Goregaon East
- **COMING UP:** The AOE Youth Wing is organising an Eco Camp at Mahad on 6th-7th May for all interested youth to strengthen bonds with nature

P.S.: Don't forget to join our mailing list through the form linked [here](#).

PRESENTS

ECO YOUTH CAMP

Location : Mahad
Date : 6th-7th May 2023
Ages : 16-30 years
Registration Cost : Rs.300

FOR REGISTRATION

GOOGLE PAY NUMBER : 81697 45310	RALPH RODRIGUES : 81697 45310
GOOGLE PAY ID : RLPHRDRGS@OKSBI RLPHRDRGS@OKAXIS	AKANKSHA FERNANDES : 98195 41129

LAST DATE TO REGISTER - 15TH APRIL 2023



WASTE TO WEALTH IN BANDRA

Janet D'souza | St Peter, Bandra West



Do we care about what happens to the huge amount of wet waste generated every day by you, me, restaurants, institutions, etc.? On 2nd February, thirty eager students of National College were soon going to find out. These students are learning about the environment and the detrimental impact created by our wasteful habits. They got in touch with our Care for Creation Group (CCG) and, through Lillian Pais, we arranged a visit to the Pali Hill Reservoir, the main source of water supply to Bandra West. There they could see / smell / experience first-hand how **waste is not wasted**. A part of the reservoir's premises has been skilfully demarcated, where, using both manual and mechanical techniques, waste gets successfully converted into electricity and compost.

Beyond midnight and into the wee hours of the morning, garbage vans unload food waste, collected largely from restaurants. The first and most critical step of the process is manual segregation. It is a humbling process to witness the laborious task of manual segregation of food waste, which emits a nauseating and decaying stench. We realised that the municipal staff are simple, hardworking, and committed to the cause. Day in and day out, in all kinds of weather, and at great risk to their health, they carry on the work of manual waste segregation. It was shocking to see so much plastic – bags, containers, and cutlery – mixed with food. Even the shredding large chunks of meat is done manually. All this waste is then fed into shredders which pulverise it into a very fine, semi-watery paste. From this step on, temperature-controlled machines convert the waste to electricity and further, to compost.

- The street lights all along Pali Road are run on this energy
- All municipal gardens are supplied with good compost from here

The instant and resounding reaction from the students was...**Wow! What a breath-taking experience!** Lessons instantly learned. The students understood the need to be mindful of waste and realised the importance of waste segregation. Charged with energy, they readily agreed to partner with the CCG and volunteered to come on board to share ideas and work on common projects.

We at the CCG, extend the invitation to all parishioners, as responsible citizens, to inculcate this lifestyle change of wet and dry waste segregation at the level of family, housing society and community. Let's waste no time.





DRIVE ON AT MAHIM

Rita D'Sa (Eco Ambassador) | St Michael, Mahim

Over these months, the Bombay Catholic Sabha – St Michael's Unit held collection drives for recyclables on 5th January, 2nd March and 1st April. In all, we handed over 73 kg of plastic bottles and single-use plastic to [Bisleri](#) and more than 700 Tetra Pak cartons to [RUR GreenLife](#).

We thank our parish priest Fr Lancy Pinto for his ongoing support in our activities. Our gratitude also goes out to the committee members and parishioners for continuously participating in these drives. Let's join together to save Mother Earth



KNOW THE ORLEM GOODNESS

Sarita Rego-Pereira | Our Lady of Lourdes, Malad West (Orlem)

*If they wouldn't live, we wouldn't be,
Life is incomplete without these.
Think how the future would be,
Without a plant or a tree.*



The Environment Cell of Orlem (E.C.O) constantly works to initiate eco-friendly measures to curb the after-effects of various kinds of pollution. The tree cover in our cities is constantly under threat and is diminishing rapidly to give way to high-rise buildings and development projects. Tree plantation is one of the important ways that help build our green cover and reduce our carbon footprints. With this in mind, we recently organised a Plant Exhibition in our parish.

Tiny tots along with their parents performed a meaningful inaugural dance on the theme '**Ek paudha aaj hum bhi lagaye**' to highlight the importance of planting trees. Various kinds of beautiful indoor / outdoor house plants along with tree saplings like jackfruit, mango, *chikoo*, red and white love apples, breadfruit, guava, custard apple, Christmas tree were on display. There were herbal and medicinal plants like *tulsi*, *adulsa*, lemongrass, aloe vera among other flowering plants.

Tree plantation, protection and measures should be encouraged to help secure our future biodiversity, flora and fauna, enhance fresh air supply 24x7 and keep our surroundings airy and cool. The exhibition was a complete hit with almost all the plants being sold out. We hope that we continue to care for nature and nurture plants, and enhance the tree cover around us leading to 'Green India' in the years to come.



TEAM UP AT FOUR BUNGALOWS!

Jasmine D'Souza Nair - Eco Ambassador | Good Shepherd, Andheri West

We know that when two or more persons are involved in a common goal, the results are accomplished faster. The word TEAM for me is - 'Together Everyone Achieves More'.

Keeping the above in mind, the 'Green Cell Team' of Good Shepherd Parish was formed in November 2021 under the guidance of our parish priest, Fr Anil Rego. Our team of seven engages in caring for nature, contributing towards the environment and reducing carbon emissions.

After brainstorming, it was decided to first focus on three areas – recycling of plastic, e-waste, and wet waste composting. The team has initiated the recycling of plastic and e-waste. Bins are marked for placing plastic and e-waste for recycling in the parish premises. The parish is registered with [Bisleri](#) which carries out the pick-up every Friday. From July 2022 to date, the parish has recycled 174 kg of plastic. E-waste recycling is carried out by [Ecoreco](#) and is done on a monthly basis. We also initiated wet waste composting for the parish. The parish staff were educated on the items that need to be kept aside for converting wet waste into manure. A separate bin for composting is placed near the grotto. The converted manure is used as a fertiliser for various plants within the church premises.

You will agree that anything to do with climate change and the environment is an ongoing process and will always remain ongoing. An upcoming event is a workshop on composting wet waste. We will also be promoting the concept of recycling and using eco-friendly products across the parish communities, neighbourhood, and housing societies. Our team looks forward to your continuous support in 'Caring for Creation'.





GOING GREEN AT KHOPOLI

Sr Marina Fernandez SCC | Holy Redeemer, Khopoli

We are committed to create a green clean campus in our Holy Redeemer parish at Khopoli. God chose Fr Christopher Lakra (Priest-in-charge) with green fingers to bring forth fruit trees and medicinal plants in an unused space. Papayas, bananas, mangos, coconuts, avocados, guavas, drumsticks, jackfruits, tamarind, lemons, pomegranates and passion fruit have all found place in the parish garden. Herbal plants are grown too, bringing relief to those ailing in the era of climate change impacts and pollution. The greenery brings much joy to all who come to the church premises. The parish team have also emphasised the importance of being active through morning walks, cycling and games. The badminton court has improved and it's great to see our parishioners enjoying their games and relaxing!

There has been also segregation of wet and dry waste. Dust bins are in place, and a compost pit has been dug to collect all dry leaves and branches. Eco-friendly celebrations ensure that the premises are kept clean. Through sensitisation sessions and awareness talks, consumerism is reduced and food wastage has decreased. Being contented with little has become a lifestyle for all to witness in the parish, taking inspiration from the words of St Francis de Sales, "Simplicity is nothing but an act of charity pure and simple, which has but one sole end, that of gaining the love of God". Sensitive to the poor, the sick and those affected by the climate crisis, parishioners have learnt to walk in synodality with each other and practise the lessons of *Laudato Si'*.

WHITE ELEPHANT STALL AT NERUL

Annie Gomez - Eco Ambassador | Our Lady of the Visitation, Nerul

Our Lady of the Visitation Church, Nerul, organised a white elephant sale on 26th March. The second-hand goods generously contributed by the parishioners were sold by the Green Cell as fundraising for charitable deeds. The sale was a grand success! We could encourage people to participate in reusing and recycling and moreover to generate funds from trash!

Second-hand goods have a big positive social and environmental impact by reducing carbon emissions and saving lots of resources, water, and energy. They also prevent old clothing and other materials from ending up in landfills or incinerators.



The environmental benefits of second-hand clothing are considerable. Mrs Deepa Paul, an active member of the Green Cell, commented, "By shopping for more second-hand clothing, the money you spend won't go toward supporting a highly polluting fashion industry but rather could be used for noble deeds like charity." This makes a huge difference by supporting a community of recycling and up-cycling. The sale we conducted is part of our outreach efforts to help underprivileged persons in Karave gaon and other nearby places.



YOUTH PASCH: A GREEN EASTER EXPERIENCE

Fr Leon Cruz SDB | Don Bosco Youth Services, Matunga

The Youth Pasch is a beautiful experience to enkindle the youth's faith deeper into the Paschal Mystery and participate meaningfully in the Holy Week Liturgies. Don Bosco Youth Services, Mumbai organised the "Youth Pasch" at Don Bosco, Lonavla from 5th to 9th April this year. There were nineteen participants and a team of Salesian and Lay Animators. The beauty of Youth Pasch is that most of the powerful sessions happen in nature.

The Youth Pasch days were filled with themes related to the day's significance, such as 'Love', 'Forgiveness' and 'Witness to Christ'. The dawn of each new day made the youngsters realise the worth of their life and the price that Jesus paid to redeem them. The daily meditations in nature and daily sessions matched the theme of the liturgy. The Exodus Experience, Labyrinth Prayer Garden, the Seder Meal and the Empty Tomb experience were a source of transformation for their lives.

Fr Ajoy Fernandes, a professional counsellor was available to meet the youth all through the Youth Pasch and accompany them in their personal struggles. The summit of the 'Youth Pasch' was the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Nailing of the Sins which gave them an opportunity to make peace with God, others, nature and themselves.

It was indeed an enriching Easter experience! A time for reconciliation, renewal, and walking together with the Lord in nature.



CATCH THEM YOUNG: EDUCATING CHILDREN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Rudyard Gomes

St Anthony, Malwani (Malad West)

“Look after the land and the land will look after you, destroy the land and it will destroy you.” Words that resonate loud and clear in the present scenario!

At long last, there is some awareness being raised that: *“we don't live on earth, we are only passing through.”* The celebration of Earth Day in 2008, is a great beginning and has paved the way for a series of wake-up calls to save the planet. A host of scientists, researchers and public figures have emphasised the need to educate children today, as they are the ones who will face the vagaries of nature tomorrow: a future that is already struggling with issues from pollution to endangered species to global warming.

Global warming has reached unprecedented heights. Planet Earth is heating up at an alarming pace and research shows that it is warmer today than it has been in the last 800,000 years. The world's resources are being depleted faster than they can be regenerated, giving rise to several questions: With the ice and glaciers melting, is it possible that the world would be underwater? What could happen to marine life? What could happen to the air we breathe?

There are no easy answers to these questions. What we know is that the quality of our oceans is deteriorating. Marine life faces severe damage from the tonnes of plastic waste dumped in the oceans every year. Coral reefs are being wiped out due to rising sea temperatures. The burning of fossil fuels, emissions from transport and the environmental impact of intensive farming have all contributed to high levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. More than 1 million species face destruction. This degradation of biodiversity will diminish the quality of water and food, and also result in the loss of natural pest control as predators like frogs and spiders become extinct. Alarming, isn't it?

How much more time does the world have to take corrective measures? Scientists have confirmed that climate change could be irreversible by 2030. Instantaneous action is needed to prevent the disastrous effects of global warming. Everyone can do their bit to combat climate change if we act NOW... We must switch to green energy today. What is green energy? It stands for renewable energy sources with the maximum environmental benefit such as electricity produced from solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, and low-impact small hydroelectric sources.

It is vital that our children learn these concepts at the basic stages of their education, both at home and in schools/colleges. Undoubtedly, they would be the best advocates for pushing for this goal to be achieved by 2030 at both national and international levels. At the moment there is much discussion, but the will to achieve this end seems sluggish and weak. If our children are motivated, they could be relied upon to carry through the action plan of using green energy. It's time to act now... for every human being on this planet, starting with our children!

HOPE IN A NATURALISTIC WORLD

Rajiv Pereira

St Anthony, Malwani (Malad West)

During the lockdown I took up gardening as a hobby, growing a few plants on my window grills, and today it has become my passion. There was no turning back as from then on, I embarked on a GREEN journey.

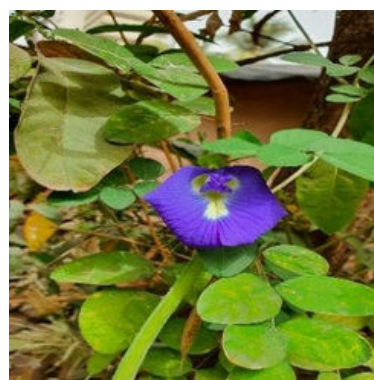
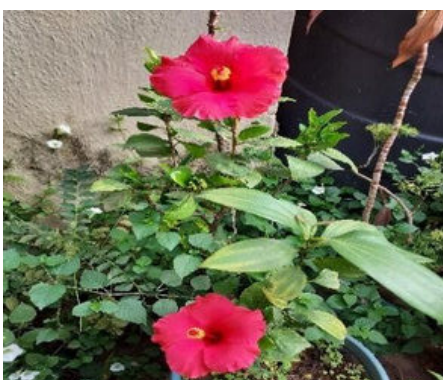
I have collected and invested in a variety of plants which now brighten up my home and my life as well. I have even collected fallen or dying plants from the roadside, brought them home, carefully cleaned and re-potted them, giving them hope of a new life. I have used various waste products in the hope that they would be good planters; kitchen waste and dry leaves in the compound are composted into lovely rich manure, as my return gift to nature.

Vegetable and fruit peels have been converted into homemade liquid fertilisers which boost my plants. Even while distressed when some boys wreck my plants while playing football, there is hope in my heart that someday they will revive and come back to life. Each flower that blooms in my garden whispers to me that there is hope, giving me immense joy and satisfaction.

“Where flowers bloom, so does hope”, said Lady Bird Johnson, urging Americans to beautify their country as she reflected on the power a flower can promulgate. Every leaf that grows in my garden reminds me that in every adversity you can stay strong. You can hold out against the fierce wind and wait for sunny days to come along. When I look at my plants shining in all their glory, I know that God is taking care of them and he will take care of me. That is why I find it important to spread hope around and I do this by making use of my gardening skills to gift my loved ones with small decorative potted plants. As they grow bigger and brighter, they add colour to the lives of those who are down.

Recently, I was encouraged when my plants were presented as birthday gifts, communion and anniversary take-away tokens and even get-well-soon gifts. They have surely added smiles to many faces. I am also a doctor to my plants. When they fall ill, I do not lose hope but carefully prune and nurture them so that they get better and healthy again. This teaches me that everything in life should be given a chance.

A beautiful plant is like having a good friend in / around the house. Like my pet dog, Jingles, my plants give me hope to move on, adding smiles and years to my life. Let me end with Fred Dale's words, which also reflect my experience: “My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things from the plant's point of view”.



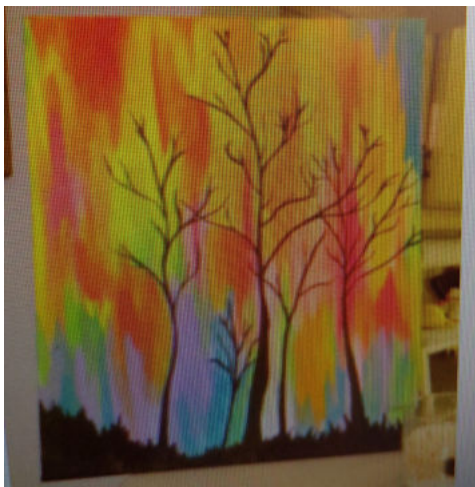
TREES – OUR GREEN FRIENDS

Monica Fernandes
St Andrew, Bandra West

Trees are the lungs of the earth.
Thanks to forests,
Of rain there is no dearth.
Trees perform an important function –
They lower levels of pollution.
Cutting trees creates problems
For which there are no solutions.

Our green friends
Beautify the place,
Provided, of course,
They are given breathing space.
“Make your cities green!”
The hoardings scream,
In a concrete jungle,
Is this not a pipe dream?

Alas, the wanton destruction
Of forests continues unabated.
Hills are barren,
The landscape denuded.
The burgeoning population
A mass of humanity
Gobbles up Earth’s valuable,
Scarce resources indiscriminate



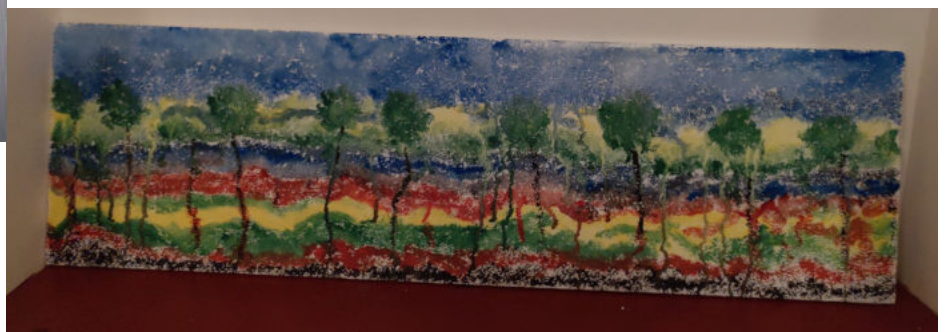
In cities, the ‘need’ for trendy wooden furniture
Never gets saturated.
In villages, trees fuel the cooking fires
Of the rural uneducated.
Trees provide paper for bulky, useless reports
Of the upwardly mobile urban educated,
They are sacrificed at the altar of officialdom,
Churning out forms quadruplicated.

Students’ grey cells are with too much
Bookish learning crammed.
Their poor befuddled brains
And forests be damned!
Incendiary pamphlets stoke the fires
Of communal hatred.
Thus trees are used for corrupt political ambitions
Which are never sated.

Trees provide paper for
Misleading ads
Which, in turn, give rise
To current fads.

This Easter, each of us can contribute our mite
To avert global catastrophe
By not cutting our green pals indiscriminately,
Not wasting paper needlessly,
Growing potted plants assiduously.

The pen is indeed mightier than the sword.
Let us then write
Wisely, Responsibly
And for the betterment of humanity.



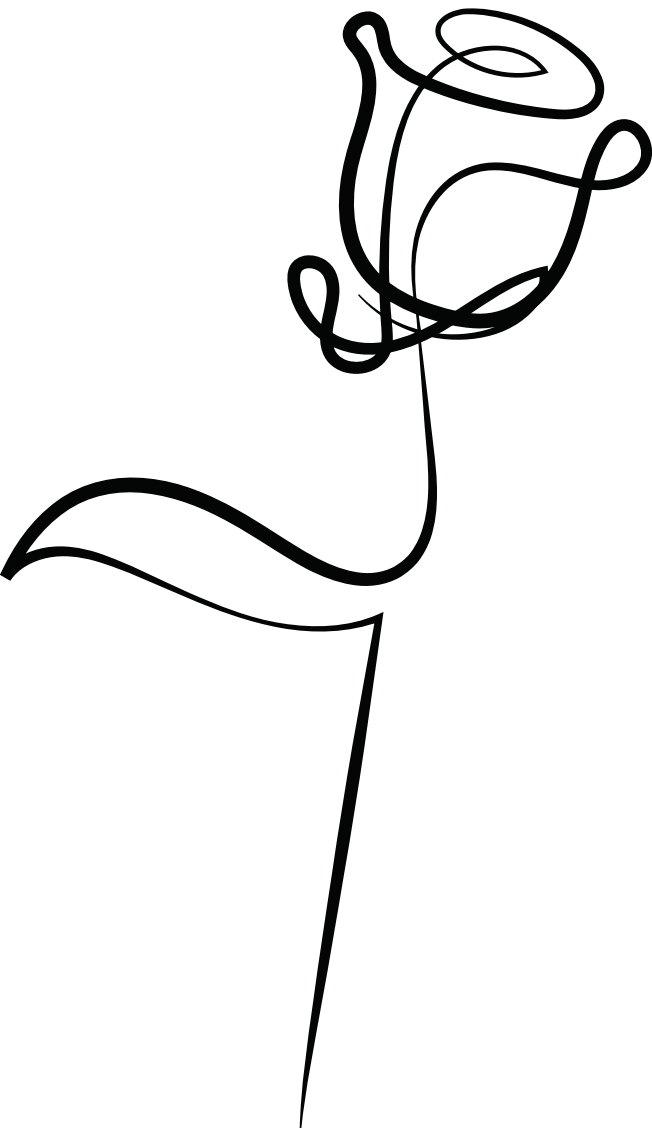
TWO ROSES

Fr Terence Quadros SJ
Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Nashik

Two glowing growing roses
consecutive three days
my little garden sings again
in polyphonic praise

a gentle blush
emerging
as nature's gentle flow
allows for just what has to be
no strain no stress no toll

and every day I live my life
just this way I must be
His will accept His pathways walk
my joy - His love for me.



THE TREE OF LIFE

Janina Gomes

Our Lady of Lourdes, Kalyan West

Lord, I thank you for the Tree of my life, which you have given me as gift, to sing your praises. I began like the small seed sown underground. Below the surface, I looked for water, and air, and developed roots.

Over the years, I have grown to the fullness of adulthood. I have sent out branches. I have grown and developed leaves. I have shed old leaves and replaced them with new leaves. Under the shade of my branches, I have given rest to the weary.

In season, I have borne flowers that speak of your glory. You have made me both tender and strong. You have sent rain from the skies to water my body and the sun to kiss me during the day.

My life has known so many phases. I have known both sadness and joy. I lift up my branches to the skies and sing your praises.

When I am old and creaky at the joints, when I can no longer have the vibrancy of youth and the strength of my earlier years, you nevertheless use me – to be like a buttress against the fierce winds and storms, and like an anchor that brings reassurance to others.


Time does not ever stand still. So, I must continue my journey on this earth and if I am felled, I will yet be of use to others.

When the wind rustles my leaves and the rising sun plays around the early morning mist enveloping me, I wake to a new day. I know that I am on mother earth for a purpose, along with the whole of creation, to sing your praises.

Lift me up O Lord, always. Help me to look not at the dank darkness but at the ebullient light. When I am aching and wounded, help me to find comfort in the protective bark around me.

I do not measure time by the human clock but by nature's rhythm. One day like all of life, my life too must end. Let that final hour be one of total surrender to you, O Lord. Till then let the tree of my life continue to nurture and bless others; and when my life is over, new life will spring forth. Thank you Lord, for the gift of life.





*Wishing you all a
blessed and happy Easter*

**Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, Fr Luke Rodrigues SJ, the
Laudato Si' Diocese Team, and
all green lovers in the Archdiocese of Bombay**





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