

**(Prof. Dr Francis Gonsalves, SJ President of JDV)**



**Web-link for the President, Prof. Francis Gonsalves' Inaugural Address :**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3w876akPTs&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR1LHdCIShICvHnx1Nc81a3v-o>

## **INAUGURAL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

Friday, July 31, 2020

Respected outgoing President, Prof. Selva Rathinam, dear colleagues of the JDV Faculty and honoured representatives of the Campus Superiors of JDV, I am happy to have you here with me today. My heart also goes out online to the Chancellor of JDV, very reverend Dr. Arturo Sosa; the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Pattery; the Patron of JDV, His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias; Vice-Patron, Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Dabre and all the other campus superiors, visiting staff, well-wishers, benefactors, stakeholders, collaborators at various levels and my dear students, sisters and brothers.

Standing before you and reaching out to you over many miles and over the seas, I paraphrase what St. Augustine said when assuming church leadership: –What I am *for* you terrifies me; what I am *with* you consoles me. For you I am President of JDV; but with you I am a human being. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. Like you, I too am a seeker—swimming in stormy seas of the Covid pandemic not knowing what struck us and not knowing when we will reach safe and secure shores. But I’m supposed to exercise President-SHIP, Leader-SHIP, Steward-SHIP and Trustee-SHIP. So, I invite each and every one of you to board my **SHIP**, as I reflect on this image, which is Biblical too. Thanks to Noah, humankind got a new lease of life in a waterproof ark-ship and St Paul was shipwrecked many times. Jonah was not so lucky to be thrown overboard and swallowed by a whale, while a microscopic Coronavirus is swallowing large sections of society. I reflect upon the image of a ship for three reasons:

(a) On March 27<sup>th</sup> this year, standing alone in Piazza San Pietro, Vatican City, Pope Francis commented on Mk 4:38, saying to the whole world, –On this boat... are all of us. Just like Jesus' disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying –We are perishing!, so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this. Yes, we are together. And, only together can we do this .....

(b) The 2016-document, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* ' on the 'Gift of the Priestly Vocation' speaks of four areas—**S**piritual, **H**uman, **I**ntellectual, **P**astoral—necessary for priestly formation, which I think are necessary for us all; and,

(c) In the very first year of his papacy, 1878, Pope Leo XIII, sold off the last ship of the Papal Navy (Italian, *Marina Pontificia*) in a sharp break from his predecessor, Pope Pius IX, symbolizing his resolve to stop all warfare and work for peace, equality and social development of all peoples. I take our SHIP back to the time of Pope Leo XIII, who, in 1890, 130 years ago, said, –*Your own sons, O India, will be the heralds of your salvation!* and got the Papal Seminary built in 1893 at Kandy, Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. He is the 'Father of the Social Doctrine of the Church' and the mastermind behind what is JDV today. So, throwing caution to the winds, let me speak from my heart, in four areas—**S**piritual, **H**uman, **I**ntellectual, **P**astoral—giving you 3 points for each area, making that 12 catchwords, which is again very Biblical: 12 Tribes of Israel of the First Testament; 12 Apostles in the Second Testament; 12 basketfuls of bread collected after feeding the multitude; Our Lady with 12 stars in her crown in the Book of Revelation

(chapter 12) and so on. We began this programme at 12 noon, and I shall speak for approximately 12 minutes, beginning from now.....

## I. SPIRITUAL:

(a) **Spirit**: –The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and has sent me to bring good news to the poor! (Lk 4:18); and the –Spirit blows where it will! (Jn 3:8). I believe that, at the start of any assignment, every Christian leader must say these words to those s/he seeks to govern because I believe that every Christian institution—and JDV, as well—is an institution of the Holy Spirit. May the winds of the Holy Spirit blow into our sails and lead us onward! May the waters of the Holy Spirit guide our ship as it travels through troubled waters. May JDV be a Hotspot of the Holy Spirit! HS of the HS!

(b) **Sacrifice** – from the Latin, *sacer + facere* = to make holy... At this very time that I'm speaking to you, there are thousands who are sacrificing their lives: doctors, nurses, caregivers and many public health workers who are giving of themselves—very much like our parents, grandparents and our teachers. Our whole world is built up by sacrifice: *tyaga*. May I, and all of us, be involved in this cosmic sacrifice.

(c) **Servanthood** – 'Servant Leadership'. I stand here because of a man called Jesus of Nazareth who said, –I have come not to be served but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many! (Mk 10:45); then, at the Last Supper before his death he got up, bent down, and he washed the feet of his disciples and said, –You call me Teacher and Lord, yes, this is what I am. If I have washed your feet, then you also ought to wash each other's feet! (Jn 13:14). So, friends, let us be servants—beginning with myself—serving each other unconditionally, joyfully and generously.

**II. HUMAN:** I was not born a Catholic. I was not born a Jesuit. I was born a human being. These

days, perhaps painfully, that little Corona virus is reminding all of us that the only thing which unites us all is our humanity, *insaaniyat*, *manushyatha*. So, *-prem se kaho hum insaan hai!* (With love, proclaim: We are all human beings! Yes, we are all human beings! Three other H's that are important within our humanity are:

(a) **Happiness:** I ask you, dear friends: are you happy? Look at Pope Francis' documents speaking about happiness: *Evangelii Gaudium* = joy of the gospel; *Gaudete et Exsultate!* rejoice and be glad! *Amoris Laetitia* = joy of love; *Veritatis Gaudium* = joy of truth; *Laudato Si!* Praise be! As human beings and as Christians, we have to be joyful people because we proclaim the good news. Someone has said: If all the priests, nuns and religious smile once a day there is no need of vocation promotion! Are we happy people to proclaim this good news?

(b) **Hopefulness:** On March 19, 2013, at his inaugural papal mass our beloved Pope Francis said: –Amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! Yes, Christianity is a religion of hope. The cross opens up to the empty tomb; Good Friday culminates with Easter Sunday; death leads to life. Thus, let's always be hopeful, optimistic, and enthusiastic. Be positive! [careful about testing positive! I am referring to resting positive because God is in us, with us].

(c) **Hospitality** → The President Council decided to have the caption *From Hostility to Hospitality* as its annual theme. What a beautiful word: hospitality! Let's open up our hearts, minds, homes and institutions to every man and every woman—no matter what her background or upbringing is. Within hospitality there is a word hospital; the whole world is now converted into a hospital. Pope Francis says that he wants our church to be a field-hospital that can be dismantled very easily with people on the move: curing people, running around. In the course of time, many people might come to us who are hurting—let us heal them. Many might come to us who are broken—let us make them whole.

**III. INTELLECTUAL:** Not referring merely to the cerebral or mind alone, but to a Solomon-like wisdom that comes from a wise and discerning heart. Three *-I's!* of importance are:

(a) **Integration:** first, within myself. Each one of us is a complex being: human, moral, mental, spiritual, social, political, aesthetic, musical etc. Let me integrate all these aspects of my being. Second, integrating the indigenous with internationality. We are very often overawed by everything foreign, everything international. Yet, there are so many indigenous, contextual resources in India which we can tap as philosophers and theologians. I'm grateful to my Indian professors—Michael Amaladoss, Samuel Ryan, Felix Wilfred, TK John and George Gispert-Sauch who was buried just yesterday; and there have been great professors here in JDV like George Soares-Prabhu whose 25<sup>th</sup> death anniversary we celebrated just a few days ago and Noel Sheth in whose room I stay at Papal Seminary. Moreover, I've also learnt much from my professors abroad—international scholars like Cardinal Luis Ladaria, currently Prefect of the Congregation of Doctrine of Faith (CDF), Rome; Gerald O'Collins, now retired in Australia and late Jacques Dupuis who was a product of the East and the West. So, let us strive to be both Indian, indigenous, and also open to the international.

(b) **Interrelationships:** Interrelationships at every level—building bridges across cultures, across religions, across languages—because we live in a global village. Moreover, we require

interrelationship with mother earth, what we call an ‘integral ecology’. Let us also cultivate ecofriendly relationship with mother earth, who is suffering badly.

(c) **Internet** – Friends I can speak to so many people today across countries and continents because of this marvel called internet. Being ‘Online’ teaching, online learning, I see JDV & the Church as a ‘Cyber Church’... Jesus told his disciples, ‘Leave your boats and nets and follow me but if Jesus was present here today, he would have said please pick up hop on to the internet and go to the corners of the earth to free internet. Let us remember that internet has many problems and many possibilities. Let us tap the possibilities & be aware of the problems.

**IV. PASTORAL:** is the art of shepherding the flock—caring for the needs and wellbeing of others, with the following three ‘P’s’ as important:

**Processes** – Pope Francis writes in EG, n.223: *‘Let us not occupy spaces; but initiate processes’*. JDV is not a fully designed product, JDV is a dynamic process. JDV is not a monument, JDV is a movement. JDV is not made of bricks and buildings, JDV is built by hearts, minds, hands and feet. JDV is not about power and positions, JDV is about people and situations. Let us work to promote processes. Friends, I’m aware that you all want to come back to JDV,

Pune. We too hope that you come back soon. However, also remember: *You* are JDV wherever you are! I am JDV! All of us are JDV across cyberspace. There are students of ours in various corners of the world: in East Timor, the Philippines, Uganda, Kenya and Sri Lanka. Many students were scheduled to come for a semester or two from Innsbruck, Austria and from the Gregorian University, Rome, but couldn’t be with us physically due to the pandemic. However, they are very much with us in spirit. So let’s go forth and create processes, not occupy spaces.

(a) **Prophetic** –To announce and to denounce is the most basic work of a prophet. On the one hand, we are called to announce good news and to accentuate all that is good; and, on the other hand, to denounce and to point an accusing finger at all that is bad, evil and unjust.

(b) **Poor:** ... I began with: *‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to bring good news to the poor.’* The option for the POOR is at the heart of JDV. It is also the essence of the universal apostolic preferences of the Jesuits all over the world. Not just to work *for* the poor but again, as Pope Francis has said: *to be poor*; and, to empty ourselves and be in solidarity with those at the peripheries of society. ... That is where Jesus lived, and those are whom Jesus loved to the very end. Let us bring to mind those masses of our sisters and brothers—walking through the highways of India with bare feet, blistered soles, skeletal bodies, with tears in their eyes. It is they who we are called to serve.

Friends, we are all caught up in the same storm, but we are not on the same ship. Yes, I’m very comfortable here, in this building, and perhaps in presidentship. But, there are many more in small boats, there are others in rafts, there are others swimming, there are others drowning and still others who have already drowned. Therefore, it is essential that we reach out to them— because in reaching out to them is my salvation, your salvation; together we will save the world.

**July 31<sup>st</sup>:** Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Happy feast to each one of you dear sisters & brothers!

July 31, 1983: I was given an object (the crucifix) by Fr. Stanislaus Fernandes, my then-Provincial and later Archbishop of Gandhinagar, when I took my First Vows ....This is the Cross that all of us get when we take our first vows.

July 31, 2001: I took my Final Vows in the Society of Jesus. This morning at Mass Fr. Bhausahab Sansare, my Rector, reminded us of Jesus’ words: *‘Whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me’* (Mt 10:38). So, I salute this great man—Ignatius of Loyola, *Inigo*—who followed Jesus on the way of the cross and founded the Society of Jesus. His

heart burned with love. He was aflame with the *MAGIS*, the *‘more’*.

Sisters and brothers, *‘yeh dil maange more’*—Hindi, meaning, this heart yearns for *‘more’*. We all have that *‘holy restlessness’* within us that keeps us restless and striving: deeper, higher, further—athirst for God. St Ignatius often looked up to the skies and the stars, dreaming of the heavens, dreaming of the horizons still unattained.

On October 15, 2016, at his inaugural Mass as Superior General of the Society of Jesus, very reverend Fr. Arturo Sosa—who is also the Chancellor of JDV—spoke to us, Jesuits, who were present at GC 36 and challenged us to have that *–Audacity of the Impossible!* Yes friends, *–Audacity of the Impossible* not because you and I are great people who can do superhuman things..... No! ... But simply because *–nothing is impossible with God!* (Lk 1:37); and, as Paul

says in his letter to the Philippians (4:13), *–I can do all things though HIM who strengthens me!*... So, I quote those words from the opera *‘Man of La Mancha’* which reechoes the *Magis* of Ignatius of Loyola, that *‘Man of Montserrat and Manresa’*:

To dream the impossible dream,  
 To fight the unbeatable foe,  
 To bear with unbearable sorrow,  
 To run where the brave dare not go,  
 To right the unrightable wrong,  
 To love, pure and chaste from afar,  
 To strive, when your arms are too weary,  
 To reach the unreachable star .....

This is my quest, to follow that star,  
 no matter how hopeless, no matter how far  
 To fight for the right, without question nor pause;  
 To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause;  
 And I know, if I only be true to this glorious quest,  
 That my heart will lie peaceful and calm,  
 when I’m laid to my rest.  
 And the world, will be better for this,  
 That one man, scorned and covered with scars,  
 Still strove with his last ounce of courage,  
 To reach the unreachable star.

Let us all together say the *‘Prayer for Generosity’* of St Ignatius: *–Dearest Lord, teach us to be generous, teach us to love and serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and to ask for no reward, except that of knowing that we do your holy will, Amen!*||

**Web-link for the whole programme for the Installation of the President :**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9x2oxgoIyk&feature=emb\\_err\\_woyt](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9x2oxgoIyk&feature=emb_err_woyt)

Thank you, God bless us all!

*Namaste!*

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