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Arrupe Insider

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The Reality of Life

Tadiwa admires his father’s agricultural enterprise. The seasons of planting and harvesting constitute his most exciting moments of each year. As early as the age of nine, he has gathered much experience about the farm from the Saturday early mornings’ planting, weeding or harvesting routine with his father. Tadiwa’s love for agriculture has earned him the ambition of owning acres of farming land and establishing a successful trade system of merchandising his farm produce. One Saturday morning, Tadiwa wakes robed in his usual enthusiasm for farm work. However, his robe is ripped by a crunch of disappointment when he catches sight of his father approaching with his old wooden gun, rather than the accustomed hoes and cutlasses. Guns, rather than hoes, have only one meaning – the tedium of hunting rather than the excitement of farming.

While on their way to the woodland for the day’s business, Tadiwa expresses his chafe by putting across this question to his father: Dad, why do we have to spend our time hunting when diligence to our farming enterprise provides us with all our needs? Sensing the indignation in Tadiwa’s tone, his father calmly decides to sooth his irritated son by justifying his idea of an occasional hunting adventure. He says, “my son, my experience of farming has taught me a humbling lesson about life’s reality. Although diligence is a prerequisite for every success yield, it is not a guarantee for the expected success of bountiful harvest. This is because nature sometimes takes an unpleasant course beyond bearing. When such reality strikes, I can always turn to my hunting skills as an alternative form of support. That is why I think it is wise not to abandon hunting”.

The row of (notable) events at AJU since the month of March, may be described as activities which have adequately met with the just reward of diligence – success. The 15th edition of AJU’s annual Marathon, held on the 2nd of March, drew open the curtain of these events. Notably, two days after the Marathon, on the 4th of March, a good number of the students were back to classes to begin the second half of the semester. The goal of the Marathon which, in the words of AJU’s Dean of Student’s Life, is to remind us of the need of a constant readiness to “stride past obstacles and look forward to self-actualization”, relays how strategic the Marathon was as a motivational factor for the students who were about to continue with their stride through the struggles and hurdles of academia.

AJU’s mid-semester assembly was held on the 13th of March, at the Loyola Multipurpose Hall. The assembly served as an official medium of discussion, update and report about the University’s activities since the opening assembly of this second semester of the 2018/2019 academic year. Details of issues brought forward and information passed across are found in subsequent pages. Meanwhile, lectures are on a smooth course, students are doing justice to course works and each tick of the clock is a steadfast reminder of due dates.

The Arrupe family welcomes its newest member, Rev. Fr. Stephen Nzyoki, who arrived Harare on the 25th of March. It is our hope that his presence would contribute substantially to our mission of love and service. Still more, on a congratulatory note, AJU celebrates with her pro-Vice Chancellor Academics, Dr. Evaristus Ekwueme who on the 3rd of April, had his final incorporation into the Society of Jesus. Of the many phrases that have been used to describe Dr. Ekwueme in relation to the reality of the commitment he made on that day, two are particularly thought-provoking. They are “the newest baby of the Society” and “an eloquent Jesuit peasant”. Moreover, the

words he himself employed in describing his feelings are outstanding: “In all my life, this is the moment when I feel mostly that I am in the hands of God”. What sort of commitment must have prompted such paradoxical descriptions and childlike emotions? As this question lingers in our hearts, we wish him God’s abiding grace on him for a greater disposition to love and service.

While we have the cause to celebrate, we are not oblivious of the death, devastation and destruction which nature’s unpleasant course has effected through the cyclone Idai. Some Southern African countries, particularly Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi received the full blow of this natural disaster unleashed on the 14th and 15th of March. It has claimed numerous lives, destroyed properties and infrastructure and in general, affected millions of people. Our deepest condolences to everyone who sorrows at the loss of a loved one in this awful experience. AJU, in collaboration with the Jesuit Province of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, supports the victims (survivors) of this disaster through the Jesuit Relief Fund.

Perhaps, we have all learnt, just like Tadiwa’s father, that nature sometimes takes an unpleasant course and this lesson makes it expedient to procure an alternative form of support when the unpleasant reality strikes. What then could better serve as a significant alternative for those whose source of livelihood has been struck by the cyclone Idai if not the aid we extend to them out of love? As such, I end this editorial by raising our awareness to the call for relief fund and support for the victims of cyclone Idai in the most affected regions of Southern Africa.

Ekesiobi Christian, SJ

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER.

GOOD FRIDAY



Soon we will be celebrating 'Good Friday'. The suffering and death of Jesus raise many questions. I want briefly to look at a few which fall under two main categories: 'Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?' And 'does the cross have any relevance for the suffering that people have been going through recently, especially in Africa?' We have had an economic melt-down, a drought, beatings and killings by soldiers in Zimbabwe, cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, and the fatal Air Ethiopia plane crash which killed all its passengers.

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross? A popular answer since the time of Anselm is the substitution theory. Man sinned against an infinite God. This deserves an infinite punishment. Only an infinite person could shoulder such a punishment to set us free. Jesus is that infinite person.

This is a simplistic version of the theory and a caricature. But in substance it is more or less accurate. And I think it is thoroughly misguided and plainly wrong. It posits a wrong image of God as a punishing God. It is unjust by making innocent people (Jesus and us) suffer for sins they did not commit. It does not effect an inner liberation and transformation from sin. It magically exonerates us from the punishment due to sin by making an innocent Jesus suffer in our stead.

Would Jesus have become human if man had not fallen? Augustine and Aquinas say 'no'. Duns Scotus says 'yes'. I side with Scotus on this one. Why?

I say so because the incarnation of God in Jesus is God's definitive revelation to us. Mystics like Meister Eckhart and modern theologians like Karl Rahner and today, Dairmud O'Murchu, relate incarnation to creation. Creation is God's self-expression in our world. It therefore begins with the big bang. God's full revelation of himself to humanity can only be possible, firstly when consciousness has evolved in the world in the form of homo-sapiens. And secondly, it can only occur when that consciousness has evolved into reflective self-consciousness which enables man to awaken to the reality of Spirit. Karl Jaspers asserts that this took place dramatically throughout the known world during the axial age (about a thousand years before and after Christ). This is when God becomes human in Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God in human form (Col.1:15). In him we see God. In his spirit we encounter the spirit of God within us, open our hearts to it, and grow in a union with it. This is the purpose of creation, and incarnation is its instrument.

So why did Jesus have to suffer and die on the



cross? The Gospel of John begins by telling us that the Word was with God, and the Word was God. It entered the world as the light of God. But there was darkness in the world and the darkness did not welcome the light. (Jn.1:1-11). This has been the case throughout history. The world of sin and darkness does not want the light. It does not want truth, love and justice. That's why people of the truth (or light) always suffer. The prophets suffered, Jesus suffered and modern day prophets suffer. This is why Jesus had to suffer. And this is what Jesus tells his followers will happen to them if they live by his words and example (Mt.10:17-24).

But how does this free us from sin? When we gaze at the cross and see the suffering that sin inflicts on one so good, we hopefully wake up to the stupidity ("Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing". Lk.23:34.), and sheer evil of sin. With the grace of God we should say: "I want nothing to do with this." It is liberation from **within**, liberation freely embraced, which is the only true liberation. It is not about someone waving a magic wand from outside and letting us off the hook from punishment due to sin.



Does the Cross have anything to teach us about the disasters and sufferings besetting us today? Basically this is the problem of evil and whole libraries can be filled with books written on this subject. We can just say a word or two about it here.

I think we can safely say that most of the suffering we see in our world can be attributed to sin. It is a consequence of sin; it is certainly not a punishment from God. If we really lived according to the teachings of Jesus, there would be no wars, no refugees driven from their countries, no gigantic gap between rich and poor, no hunger, no oppression and injustice etc. Even much of the suffering caused by natural disasters can be attributed to our sinful treatment of planet earth and its creatures. The world (apart from hardened egoists like Donald Trump) is waking up to this fact and warning that if we do not change our ways, catastrophic consequences will follow.

If it is true that most suffering is a consequence of sin, then the Cross has a very significant relevance. For, as we have seen, it is about liberation and redemption from sin. And this spells freedom from suffering caused by sin.

But here we must be careful. Obviously we cannot say that every time someone suffers it is a consequence of his/her sin. Clearly that is not the case. It can be a consequence of someone else's sin, or a whole social system of sin, or ecological sin. Also we cannot classify all suffering this way. There are some sicknesses, earthquakes, asteroids hitting earth etc. which cannot be ascribed either to individual or social sin. We have to accept that the world and life is governed by order and laws, but also by a certain freedom, unpredictability and indeterminism. This combination of law and freedom enables change and evolution to happen.

And where there is freedom, there is room for mistakes. On the micro-scale, this might seem to be a total disaster, but it is life enabling on the macro-scale. The extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago was a disaster for them but a blessing for us. We would not be around if it had not happened. The apparent disaster of the crucifixion enabled the new creation of resurrection. This is what gives us hope in the face of personal suffering, social suffering and even global and cosmic suffering. As Paul assures us (2Cor 5:17), Christ's resurrection assures us of a new creation even in the face of global catastrophe. It is scientifically certain that in five billion years time the sun will turn into a red giant and then a white dwarf as happens to all stars. At the red giant stage our planet earth will be burnt up. But the groaning of this creation (Rom 8:21-24) will give rise to a new creation. Not that we will be around in five billion years. But even if we were, we would derive great hope from this. The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus assure us of this hope.

May these thoughts give us some food for reflection and prayer on Good Friday.

Roland VonNidda – AJU Chaplain

The Tale of an Eloquent Jesuit Peasant

Wednesday of the fourth week of Lent, 2019. It was the third day of the month of April. You could hardly tell that it was Lenten season in the Chapel of the Holy Name at Arrupe Jesuit University. It was a regular Wednesday community Mass for the Jesuits, but there was something in the air. There were more cars than usual in the parking lot beside and behind the school hall. A cord struck. From afar, I could see golden letters arranged as W – E – L – C – O – M – E smiling at me from the entrance of the chapel. The style and dexterity of the letters were too familiar. They were at once arty and assuring.

As I got closer to the chapel, the pillars which usually posed at the main door were not bare today. Both of them were decorated with what I figured were names of somebody. The one on the left had E-V-A- R- I-S-T-U-S. The pillar on the right rocked E-K-W-U-E-M-E. All sixteen letters had different, accentuating colors. As I took a place in the middle of the crammed chapel, I could not help but admire the fascinating masterpiece on the sanctuary. The artist, Mr. Alex Akalefu, SJ, beautifully decorated the area around the crucifix with a depiction of a chalice and a host, and a man kneeling before another attractively, bald-headed man. The drawing posed in the middle of the inscription - “Lord, Receive this Holocaust in an Odour of Sweetness”.



The Master of Ceremony thrilled the congregation with humor and insight. He brought light to our eyes and fire to our hearts. He

explained the difference between probation and formation, between Jesuits and professed Jesuits.

Did the chapel not overflow with people?

Friends, colleagues, families and companions?



Did the novendus not process in, clad in a golden chasuble?

Accompanied by his teachers, peers, friends and some who played different roles in his formation?

A man whom the Master of Ceremony, Mr. Charles Ugwuonah, SJ, introduced as one who needs no introduction

in the Arrupe Community, whose presence inspires joy in the hearts of many in the community, began the Mass. They called him the Provincial Superior – Fr. Chuks Afiawari, SJ. Although the Arrupe Community had a reputation for animating beautiful liturgical celebrations, today’s Mass had an extra vibe to it. The male



-dominated choir sang with fresh inspiration, the congregation participated with joyful acclamation and ululation, and the homilist, Fr. Gilbert Mardai, SJ, broke the word with heavenly eloquence and meticulousness. Throughout the ceremony, the atmosphere throbbbed with excitement. At the moment of the pronouncement of the vows, the atmosphere pulsated, in the words of the provincial, at the “birth of a new Jesuit”. Each one listened intently as the

novendus committed himself into eternal union with God through the Society of Jesus.

The preacher told a story of Shaka Zulu and shiny objects, of Eva’s secrets and history.

A love story where the Society tried its lover for virtue, tested him for dedication, judged him for competence, verified him for commitment, and evaluated him for suitability.



Did we not watch the lover fulfill the promise he made to his Heart-throb 24 years ago; a romantic expedition punctuated by difficulties and trials, vicissitudes and denials, joy and pain, fulfilment and disdain?



On knees hardened by the rigors of the journey, and eyes fixed on the

broken body and bleeding heart of his Beloved, he enunciated every word of the vows he wrote in his own handwriting, with an undivided heart, with every beat vibrating with thanksgiving.



The Arrupe Community is famous for the enthusiasm that characterize their thanksgiving. Today, the heat was turned on. The singer, Mr. Anthony Otah Kalu, SJ, thrilled the congregation to the Nigerian – choruses – styled thanksgiving. The chapel, for a quarter of an hour, became a typical Sunday Mass in the heart of Nigeria. Jesuits, friends, collaborators and families joined the dancing, as Evaristus led the mania with articulate steps inspired by the zest of his rebirth into the Society of Jesus. Perhaps the most emotionally-charged moment of the cele-



bration was when the new born Jesuit expressed gratitude to all and sundry for their support to him all through the



journey. Special attention was given to Frs. Stephen Buckland SJ and Kizito Kiyimba SJ, who were both his teachers at the then Arrupe College. Such a rare occurrence to have one's peers and teachers present at one's final incorporation ceremony. We paid homage to Evaristus' immediate family members who travelled from Nigeria to grace the occasion; his mother Mrs. Bernadette Ekwueme, his elder brother Mr. Joseph Ekwueme, and his nephew Mr. Michael Ozide.

The mother of the man beamed with smiles and pride. She watched the son who has now become her father commit himself to perpetual religious peasantry through poverty, guided obedience and loving chastity.

Did his brother not feel honored by the warmth of the community, and his nephew admire the courage of his uncle to grow in fidelity?

Did we not watch the father extol his mother with praises, showering her with blessings, dramatically embracing her, and appreciating her support through the 24 years of graces?

The elaborate dinner that followed saw more dancing, eating and wining. Lenten observations were suspended. Even Father Ignatius would have given permission. A round of testimonies and presentation of gifts punctuated the eating, drinking and conversations. As Sister Even-



ing drew the curtains on the event, the crowd thinned and the owners of the house remained. With unrehearsed coordination, the members of the ANW province present circled around the new born eloquent Jesuit peasant, and broke into a wave of traditional dancing. Osita Osadebe's *Ebezina* oiled stiff bones, bent straight hips, and wobbled straight legs. Each member present had an opportunity to showcase what they considered as dancing skills. Of course, nobody beat the new born Jesuit. His joy was the fullest, his legs were the fastest, and his smiles, the broadest!



Music became the voice that told the tale of the eloquent Jesuit peasant.

He swayed to the left, he flowed to the right. His feet light as a feather, his arms flying like they can cut through leather. His joy overflowing as the labors of his peasantry has yielded golden sheaves. His eyes sparkling with excitement, his voice ringing gratitude across Mount Pleasant.

Did we not see joy take root in his life? Did we not watch him make dedication his wife? Did the tale of the eloquent peasant not inspire younger peasants around, teaching us to embrace peasantry with the Jesuits; writing our own love stories, and striving to fulfill the promise to enter that same Society, vowing perpetual poverty, obedience and chastity?

Uchechukwu Oguike, SJ.



AJU Marathon 2019

AJU MARATHON CHAMPIONS GALORE: Mr. Moses Tarakinyu and Mr. Christian Ekesiobi SJ, are this Year's 20km and 10km AJU Marathon Champions Respectively.



The Mt. Pleasant neighbourhood was charged with splendour and glamour on Saturday, 2nd March, as Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU) held the 15th Edition of her annual Marathon under the theme of: “Run for Fun, Run for a Child, Run for the Future.” The event was held in Harare and was well attended with participants coming from all walks of life and all corners of the country – most notably Bulawayo. The event had three categories: a 5Km walk that attracted the highest participation for obvious reasons, a 10Km Fun Run and the epitome of the event which was the 20Km run. All three categories were well represented by both men and women preceding; and particularly, the Marathon was graced by the presence of Paralympic athletes. Just like the preceding editions, this year's edition was organised for charity purposes and the proceeds were channelled towards the continual sponsorship of the girl child in Mbare. The 5km event was a charity walk while the other two were competitive races, with the winner from the 10km race pocketing 50 USD. The winner of the 20Km race got 80 USD and the first runners up got 60 USD.

The university premises were a bee hive of activities as from 0500hrs as the student body came together for the final organizational touches to make the day a success. Participants started trooping in, in all colours, sizes and shapes and in no time, the registration desk was teeming with activities as people sought their tickets between.



With enthusiasm and the thrill of the task ahead, the marathon was flagged off by the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Arrupe Jesuit University, Dr. Evaristus Ekweume SJ at 0720hrs.

The 20km Men's race saw Mr. Moses Tarakinyu lift the coveted Champions trophy with Mr. Munyaradzi Jari and Mr. Ebel Chibanda coming in the second and third places, respectively. The Ladies title was clinched by Ms. Olivia Chitate followed by Ms.

Nomaqhawe Bhebhe and Ms Brenda Makonyere, respectively. The Paralympic title was won by Mr. Samson Muroyiwa followed by Mr. Charles Doro. There were no female Paralympic athletes in the competition. Mr. Mark Nyipouch Dimo Abang SJ, a first year student was the first Arrupean to finish the 20Km race. The junior event, the 10Km category was won by Mr. Christian Ekesiobi SJ, a second year AJU student. Mr. Hubert Niyokuru SJ, a third year AJU student came in second with Mr. Tendai Zimuto coming third. The ladies category saw a stiff competition with Ms. Moreblessing Masvosve clinching the title. She was closely followed by Ms. Rumbidzai Jani and Ms. Bongani Chikanga, respectively. There were no Paralympic athletes in the 10km event.



The victors were welcomed by the waiting crowd and showered with lots of affection and ovations. This was followed by the closing ceremony in which Dr Evaristus Ekweume SJ rewarded the champions with their awards. Honourable mentions are due to all who successfully completed the 5Km walk, 10Km and 20 Km race as well as the logistics team which worked behind scenes to make the event nothing but a success. Gratitude is due to the AJU family for their



commitment to this cause; the Zimbabwe Republic Police for their support especially with the traffic controls and escort, the AJU first aid team as well as the ambulance services and all those who took their time to ensure that all the guest participants felt at home away from their homes.

Vive Les Champions!

Victor Mureithi, SJ



The Marathon, Death and Self Actualization: A Reflection on the 2019 15th Edition of the AJU Annual Marathon



African athletes have been dominating the global Marathon events particularly athletes from Ethiopia and Kenya. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the origin of this sporting event is ancient Greece. Legend holds that a soldier-messenger ran from the ‘battle of Marathon’ to Athens to report their victory ca. 490BC. The soldier did not stop nor rest, he ran the entire 40Km (25 miles) and burst into the city shouting, “*Neniekamen*” (We have won). Immediately after delivering the news of the victory, he collapsed and died.

The Greeks then initiated the sporting in his honour. With time, the event in its various form found its way to the Olympic sports in 1896. It is conclusive that the soldier’s death was not in vain, neither was the joy of the recipients of his message who had to juggle the good news and the death of the messenger.

As the curtain falls on this year’s edition of Arrupe Jesuit University annual Marathon, the joy and tranquillity exhibited by the participants, spectators and organizers, are evidence enough for the great work done, a proof of the milestone achieved, and a mirror of self-actualization realised especially by the runners. The hearty congratulations, infectious laughter and beaming glances exchanged on the finishing line was an incarnation of this year’s theme: ‘Run for Fun, Run for a



Child, Run for the Future.’ I cannot fathom a better embodiment of this fact than the observations noted at around 1030hrs, when the last batch of the runners trickled in gallantly. The aura of their confidence told it all; they had outdone themselves, taken the bull by its horns and emerged victorious in their own different ways. Indeed, along the way of the brave and the great abounds acts of self-actualization, acts of out doing one’s self, and acts of taking on the world. In the words of AJU’s Dean of Students Life, Fr. Chucks Mueme SJ:

“The joys and anxieties of marathoners... remind us that running a marathon involves readying ourselves to stride past obstacles and look forward to one of the values/objectives of marathoners, Self-Actualization. Self-actualization is a run we must engage and a continuous route we necessarily travel on, striding onward.”



The blitz and glory of this year’s edition impel us to go out, to encounter the world, to experience its joys and sorrows and to respond in kind service. The determination of the athletes rushing towards the finishing line inebriate us to become aware of the deep desire in us to meet the needs and the desires of the world by love, through love and for love. Symbolized by the death of the fabled Greek messenger, may we die to our fears, our insecurities, and our shortcomings

and take on the challenges ahead of us. There is no gain without pain; no progress without trials. Stillmore, may the time of our exit from the stage, whichever stage it might - whether it is our period of study at Arrupe, our stay in any place, any occupation, or engagement or ultimately from mortal life - present an oxymoron of bitter sweetness. May the sweetness be a taste of the goodness of the message lived out in our lives and the bitterness arise from the pain of our exit from the stage. So as to achieve such an end, may we stride onward towards self-actualization and more importantly, like the last batch of runners on the finish line, may we never give up. May we rest if we must, but never give up as we strive “Ever to Love and to Serve”. It begins with you and I; it begins with us.

Long live the inspiration of our runners in our hearts.

Victor Mureithi, SJ



Minutes of the Arrupe Insider Board Meeting

On March 22, 2019, at 1:33 p.m., the members of the Arrupe Insider Editorial Board commenced its meeting for the second half of the semester. Points of discussion consisted of the commendation and recommendation of the current executive team; the evaluation of the draft of the Insider's constitution, and the election of the new editor-in-chief for the next academic year.



In regards to appraisal of the outgoing leading team, some good achievements were noticed. A good number of articles were produced both from the members of the Editorial Board and other members of Arrupe Jesuit University. The members of the Board have worked together in proofreading, designing, editing, and publishing articles produced. The current editor-in-chief encouraged the members of the Board to continue with the spirit of not only proofreading produced articles, but also producing articles as well as encouraging members of the university to contribute to

the Insider. He brought to the board the request of a new student of the Transformational Leadership program, Michael Ndiwene, we desires to become a member of the Board. The members of the Board applauded such a desire and saw it fit to accept his request.

In regards to the evaluation of the drafted constitutions of the Insider, some points for revision and improvement were highlighted. Among the highlighted points were the removal of the phrase "Journal of Students' Association", since the insider is

no longer directly under the jurisdiction of AJU's student association. Next, there was need for clarification of which the Deans (Dean of Studies or Dean of Student's Life) is responsible for the Insider Newsletter. The members of the board also suggested the termination of the appointment of Board members Insider Board (if they were any) who no longer participate actively in the activities of the Board. The



final point that was raised concerned the relationship between the Media Center and the Insider. It was suggested that an appeal be made to the Dean that a member of the Editorial team of the Insider becomes a de facto member of the Media Centre. This suggestion was brought forward given the fact that the service of the Media Centre is always needed by the Editorial Board for an effective coverage and easy access of pictures as at when due. However, it is not always the case that the members of the Media Center are disposed to render such services effectively to the Insider. As such, it would be more helpful for the Insider team if they could have a member of the Insider team who has access to the equipment of the Media Center and whose primary duty is to ensure a smooth correspondence between both teams.

Moreover, the next item on the agenda which



was discussed was the possibility of having another moment of get together before the end of the semester. The reason for this gathering would be to officially extend due gratitude and a token of appreciation to the members of the board who have served diligently and fulfilled their 3-year term of office (appointment). This proposal was unanimously accepted by every member as a worthwhile idea. Nevertheless, further planning with regards to the proposal was left to the

initiative of the executive team

Towards the end of the meeting, an election was held for the office of the next editor-in-chief of the Insider. To this office, two members of the board were eligible namely Joseph Ghansah and Manirakiza Victor. The result of the election saw the emergence of Joseph Ghansah as the next editor-in-chief. He won with 8 votes over 3 votes (for Victor). There were eleven people who casted their votes to this regard. (It is noteworthy that the reason for electing a new editor-in-chief is so that he or she may begin to gain enough experience and aptitude for the office before the month of August when he assumes due responsibility.)

During the time of any other business (AOB), the members of the board whose terms of appointment gradually draws to an end were asked to keep on

supporting the Insider team in whatever capacity was possible, especially when their help would be solicited for. And in the absence of further items of discussion, the meeting was terminated at 2:20 p.m..

Nyandwi Pierre, SJ – Secretary of the Arrupe Insider Editorial Board

Presented by Dr. Evaristus Ekueme, Dr. Kizito Kiyimba and Mr. Reagan Chingamale



This article is written in a moment where, two major disasters have affected the world; the first one is the air crash involving an Ethiopian airline which killed everyone on board. The second is the cyclone Idai has claimed a lot of lives in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. We remember with great sorrow those who have fallen and we keep the survivors and those affected in our memories.

Our University is becoming more and more, a citadel of excellence and a centre of educational attraction for many, close by and far away. Those of us studying here would of course want to see and hear the progress we are making and the activities of both the students association and the administration. This was the mood that gathered us on March 13, in what was called the mid-semester academic assembly. As the assistant Dean of Studies said, the meeting was the first one being held at Arrupe in her capacity as a university. The Pro Vice-Chancellor academics, Dr Evaristus Ekwueme, made his remarks in many points, giving us the update of dos and don'ts of the University and many other details concerning the works and structure being put in place. There was a moment of silence remembering those who died and for all the members of our academic community who lost someone dear to them since the last meeting. In a particular way, Dr Ekwueme asked the assembly to observe a moment of silence in honor of those who perished in the tragic air-crash of Ethiopian aircraft Boeing 737 Max 8 flight ET 302 near Addis Abba, the capital city of Ethiopia. Among the dead, there was an Arrupe Alumnus Cedric Asiavugwa; he was a 3rd year Law Student at Georgetown University, USA. At the moment of the tragic event, he was returning to Kenya, his homeland.

The Pro Vice-chancellor mentioned that the board of Trustee met to discuss some issues concerning the University and during their free time they got T-Shirts of the University leading by example and encouraging everyone to have one. Our university has new lecturers, reiterated the PVC-Academics; Mrs. Tsihi Chigodo of ICT department and Sr. Dr Monica Nyachowe OP - Lecturer in education and leadership, both of them were welcomed by the PVC – Academics. Arrupe schools will be emerging little by little, this time a new program has begun – the BA Hons. in Transformational Leadership – the new students were welcomed by the dean of students' life and the PVC- Admin. Gratitude was given to those who helped in orienting the new students, giving them directions and most basic information about our campus and our way of proceeding as a university.

The PVC - Academics also told the assembly that there will be a visit from the Pontifical Gregorian University to Arrupe Jesuit University this academic year. He congratulated Mr. Jean Claude Nsabimana, SJ a 3rd year Student of Philosophy and humanities for publishing a paper in the *International Journal of Sciences; Basic and Applied Research*. Mr. Nsabimana's paper is titled "*Epistemic Objectivity behind Inductive Probability: Beyond Carnap-Popper Controversy on the Problem of Inductive Logic*". This was a way of encouraging other students to participate in research and publication. This is where it begins, Chiedza journal, Arrupe Insider are some of the media through which students can write and publish their stories and articles; good starting points as one aims higher - beyond *Carnap-Popper controversy*. Moreover, the PVC – Academics highlighted that our institution

awaits the accreditation of ZIMCHE for the commencement of the PHD program in Philosophy.

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Workshop went well. The workshop served as an opportunity to raise awareness concerning the safety of children and vulnerable adults in our society. Sexual scandal is a reality which has caused a lot of damage in our society. It was encouraged that students should read the AJU Child Protection Policy to further their knowledge on the safeguarding of minors.

Our University bears the name of Arrupe. He was an incredible man who lived an inspiring life in our own time. The celebration of Arrupe day went on as planned and a lot of activities occurred. We had the acrobats on the day – a balancing and teamwork activity which requires a lot of concentration, the spitfires, the Gule and other traditional groups. The PVC - Academics reminded the assembly of the *Image of a God who enjoys the Fragrance of Roasted*



Goat meat. This was an idea from the homily given by the chancellor of Arrupe Jesuit University, Fr. Orobator. It was a story of God who is near us and accepts the offering from humans. He takes pleasure in interacting with us in our daily lives; He comes to meet us in our struggles towards perfection and helps us when we need help – it was the story of God with us.

One of the most remarkable events during the course of this academic semester, was the realization of Arrupe marathon. Many people, students, staff, and friends of AJU participated. The Paralympics came and gave us an unspoken testimony of the possibility to realize one's dreams no matter the circumstance. Mr. Christian Ekesiobi, SJ and Mr. Abang Mark were two students of Arrupe who did the university proud during the Marathon. However, all the Arrupeans who participated are worthy of applause. The 2020 Arrupe marathon is already set to take place on February 22, the Saturday before the reading week of the second semester of the next academic year.

The PVC – Academics reiterated that there should be a sense of financial responsibility among students. Students are not allowed to enter into any formal agreement on behalf of the university without the university's explicit permission. In addition, all financial transactions with any external body must be authorized by the rightful administration. The PVC -Academics warned that any student who incurs any financial debt on behalf of the University

must see to its settlement. This is a call to responsibility.

Students at the assembly were reminded that all the coursework must be returned or resubmitted. All marked assignments must be returned to the administration towards the end of every semester. This is in order to secure a proof that one has participated in the course and has fulfilled the requirements. If one does not return the course work, such incident will not be in the favour of the students, said the PVC-Academic. He further advised that illnesses during the exam period must be treated with urgency. Anyone who falls sick during an examination must visit a medical practitioner on time and obtain proof – a letter written and signed by the medical practitioner. This letter would have to be handed on to the PVC -Academic as an authentication of the fact of an illness during the exam period. It is only with the fulfilment of this requirement that a student would be allowed to reseat for an examination after total recovery.

Meanwhile, the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Dr Kizito Kiyimba, gave a brief but concise report of his trip to Rome. He also spoke of the university's progress in partnering with the French Institute, ICAM. Arrupe Jes-uit University, in his words, will be partner of ICAM. More than just for the benefit of the school of engineering which we are looking forward to establishing, this partnership also presents an opportunity of striking the Ignatian ethos at its core since it is one thing that both institutions hold in common. The vice chancellor in short, mentioned about his visit to Rome where he brought special greetings and blessings from the Pope.

The president of the Students' of Association gave the last address to the assembly. He was very grateful for the activities that have been realized so far and recognised some areas of improvement. His hope was that the incoming office bearers would be able to carry on from where his team has stopped. In addition, he spoke of the elections coming up and all the students were encouraged to participate actively in various capacities.

The mid-semester academic Assembly was a platform of sharing information and giving updates. What is presented above is an extract from many information that was passed across. We hope that Arrupe will continue to grow and that our University shall continue being a place where we learn how *to love and to serve* without counting the cost.

Estevao Lucas, SJ

Spirituality/Faith

What do we gain from lent?



Lent is a period of fasting, moderation and self-denial; traditionally observed by Catholics and some protestant denominations. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter Sunday. Lent lasts for 40 days, excluding Sundays. During lent, participants eat sparingly and give up some food or habits. Some people give up smoking, idle talks, watching television, eating candy or telling lies. It is six weeks of self-discipline. From Ash Wednesday to Easter, many symbolically mark their foreheads with ash, fasting or abstaining from certain foods or physical pleasures. This is done to imitate

Jesus Christ's 40-day fast in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-2).

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "the real aim of Lent is, above all else, to prepare men and women for the celebration of the death and Resurrection of Christ. The better the preparation the more effective the celebration will be. One can effectively relive the mystery only with purified mind and heart. The purpose of Lent is to provide that purification by weaning men and women from sin and selfishness through self-denial and prayer, by creating in them the desire to do God's will and to make His kingdom come by making it come first of all in their hearts."

According to Tom Hoopes, Catholics have a bad reputation. By that he means that the world looks at Catholics as largely irrelevant and mostly negative. In whatever projects that the society proposes, Catholics do not cooperate, rather they oppose them. Catholics are compared to the grumpy family that sits glumly in the corner, interrupting its moody silence only occasionally in order to make things awkward for the people who are trying to have fun. He suggests that if Catholics are the Dobbie downers, lent would seem to be their glorious season, the time to kill the fun. He calls people to remember that lent is about choosing one's jargon – it is proactive not reactive; positive not negative; offense not defense.



Whence, he suggests three strong

benefits of lent. First, lent makes one beautiful. It does not mean that fasting can improve one's looks. Rather, it means that Lenten prayer change one's looks. He gives an example of mother Theresa who was both the ugliest woman who ever existed; and one of the most beautiful women who ever existed. Her physical portraits: wrinkled, leathery, stooped, bags under her eyes and an oversized nose. However, those who met her cannot describe her as ugly. She was suffused with radiance that makes one want to spend his or her time with her. She was filled with a deeper beauty than her appearance could account for. Catholics believe that the soul and body are one which implies that by uniting with God in prayer, one's whole being can become beautiful. The physical features of mother Theresa didn't define her. What defined her was the form given her by her spirit. There is no one more attractive than a person who has turned his or her body into the vessel for a beautiful spirit.

Any catholic should know that this phenomenon is not limited to mother Theresa. A person who prays constantly in the midst of difficulties has a smile that keeps him or her going. A child who is brought up with a loving devotion to God becomes a source of blessing to the family. If one prays and really connects with Jesus Christ, they can get some of that same wisdom and innocence which is his by nature.

Second, lent (fasting) offers one a greater standard of living. Everyone is familiar with the feeling of disappointment. It is one of the predominant feelings associated with negative experiences or our insatiable nature. If people are poor, for instance, they would likely be disappointed because they preoccupy their minds with images of 'wealth as happiness'. Even the rich get disappointed because some other desire of theirs does not get fulfilled to their satisfaction. Everyone wants his or her life to be bigger and better; but we can never do away with our human insufficiency. The more one seeks futilely after material pleasures, the more one starts to settle for lesser standards; one accepts a modified joy and a compromised happiness. Fasting is like training one's system to make one remember that life's pleasures is not all that there is. There is always something greater, that which truly satisfies; the source of infinite goodness and joy. Jesus found this in the desert.

Third, lent offers the greatest happiness available for humankind. It is central paradox of life that the more people try to make themselves happy, the less happy they become; and the more one tries to make someone else happy, the happier he or she is. The more one grabs at pleasure, the more it slips through one's fingers. The more one gives it out, the more it feels his or her heart. This is not the reign of selfishness; this is the gift of charity. Man finds himself only by making himself a sincere gift to others (Vatican II).

Nyandwi Pierre, SJ



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“A Goal Properly Set is Halfway Reached”

Reflections from a Workshop with the Youth

“He came down to do the will of God.” This was a response to the question, “what was the goal of Jesus when He came down to the earth?”. On the 10th March, I got the opportunity to participate in a workshop that was offered to the vocational youth at Saint Martin’s Parish. It was indeed a great day! The program began with a Shona Mass in the morning which was celebrated by Fr. Chiromba. Fr. Chiromba, is the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC). After the Eucharistic celebration, we proceeded to the hall, where



the workshop took place. The workshop centred on ‘Goal Setting and Planning’ and it was presented by Miss Theresa Sanyatwe, a Program Administrator assistant in the education commission of ZCBC.

The main objective of the workshop was to encourage the youth of the parish to set goals in preparation for a better future. In fact, it appears to be difficult nowadays for most of the young people to take time to reflect on what they want to do in life. Some young men and women are challenged by the advancement of technology. This then brings them to give less time to think about their future. Moreover, they are much busy with the present, which is full of technological development and modernity which in a way can become a distraction if not properly utilised. One of the many examples that can be given is the use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, ...), which has become the major preoccupation of a number of youthful minds.

The unhealthy part of it is the inability of these youths to rid themselves of these distractions and move towards their destination. There is a greater chance that these young ones who are preoccupied by the advancement of technology will have no time to reflect on what they want to do in future. The workshop deemed it fit for the youth to set goals for themselves, think about these set goals in a very serious way, and work towards achieving them. (The presenter defined goal in this context as the result or achievement toward which effort is directed). However, one ought to note that goals are not set anyhow, as Zig Ziglar would say, ‘a goal properly set is halfway reached’. To this effect, Miss Sanyatwe told those present to set both short term and long-term goals which are positive, moderate and realistic goals; short and long-term goals. She stated that, “when planning for goals, one has to make them precise and keep reviewing them very often in order to see if there is progress”. This can be seen as one of the ma-

jour elements which can lead the youth to successfully achieve his or her goals. This review can be done in the form of the popular Ignatian “examination of consciousness” or Examen, which helps one to review his or her activities of everyday life. There was a lot of exhortation by the presenter, and the participants were happy and showed much interest in the workshop.



After the presentation, I was given the opportunity to speak to the youth about obstacles that people encounter on their way which prevent them from achieving their target. I employed the Ignatian text of the “Principle and Foundation” (EX 23), to drive home the point that we ought to be firm in letting go of those things in life which do not help us to pursue the end for which we are created (to praise, reverence and serve God).

In line with this text, we agreed unanimously not to seek those things that do not help us to pursue our own goals. Notably, the use of social media is actually not bad in itself. However, there is a great need to manage it so that it can be useful in the pursuit of one’s aspirations rather than being a means to one’s own destruction.

Thus, the emphasis is not on rejecting modernity, rather, it is on the right use of it in achieving our aims in life. In other words, we are to adopt the trends of modernity and technology in so far as it leads us towards our expected end. By so doing, we will be able to relate with the Information and Communications technology, not as an end in itself, but only as a means to an end. Furthermore, Mr and Mrs Gudya who were in attendance at the workshop were used as an example of a couple who succeeded in setting their goals rightly and are successfully living out the goals they had set. In 2012, when the couple got married to each other, they did not have much to sustain their new family. However, because they were able to decisively set their priorities aright, they set their goals and consistently pursued them. Consequently, they now have their own house and two big shops in Harare town. With this testimony, the the youth were then encouraged to begin planning for their future from an early stage.

After the workshop, a very nice lunch comprising of snacks and soft drink was served. Thereafter, a group photograph was taken after we dispersed!

Eric Manirabona, SJ

Symposium Hangover

The Primacy of Consciousness



I would like to offer in summary form a paper I had prepared to give at the Arrupe Symposium.

INTRODUCTION

Common sense, as well as the scientific and the empirical methods, seem to suggest that matter is the ontological primitive of reality. After all, material things are observable, tangible, quantifiable, predictable, and subject to investigation and empirical verification. They are ‘real’. It appears to be a reasonable assumption that everything is made of matter.

Thus many scientists today are reductive materialists or naturalists. Matter generates brain, brain mind, and mind consciousness. For hardened reductionists, like Daniel Dennett, there is no such thing as consciousness. It is an illusion.

I want to suggest that the classical Christian spiritual and mystical traditions put it the other way round. Spirit, or consciousness is prime, and matter is an expression of consciousness. This is not only true of the Christian spiritual masters but also of the masters and writings of other mainline religions. We find it in the Hindu Upanishads, in the Advaita and Vedanta traditions, in the teachings of the Sufis, like Rumi, and in the Buddhist Tripitaka scriptures. It is also the contention of many idealist philosophers from Plato to Berkeley (although he was an empiricist), to Keith Ward today.

Here I want briefly to enunciate this position, look at some materialist objections to it, and provide answers to those objections. Let us begin with Aquinas and Meister Eckhart.

AQUINAS

God. Aquinas distinguishes between **Essence** and **Existence**. Existence refers to the **being** (aseitas) of a thing, whilst **essence** denotes the nature of the thing, or the kind of thing it is. For God, Existence and Essence are one, since he is Existence or Being itself; his very nature (or essence) is to exist. He is necessary being. This ‘being’ is not some static, inert entity (like a lump of matter), but is **self-aware** being, or **pure spirit** or **pure consciousness**.

Us. Looking at ourselves, or any being, from the point of view of ‘being’, we have our being from the **One Being** who is God. “In him we live and move and have our being” as Paul asserts. (Acts 17:28). Thus we cannot be separate from God. My deepest self (my ‘I’) is God. Or as Meister Eckhart puts it: *“What is life? God’s being is my life. If my life is God’s being, then God’s existence must be my existence and God’s is-ness is my is-ness, neither less nor more”.* (Meister Eckhart)

The mystics of different traditions have varying images to illustrate this. One is the ocean of consciousness. In the ocean we have different forms, e.g. ripples, whirlpools, waves, some small, some big, some crashing down leaving a foam of white water. These are all different forms of the water but their substance is the ocean or water. In similar fashion we are different expressions of the one being who is God. Paul expresses this in another way in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The apophatic way. For Aquinas and the mystics God, from the point of view of his Being, cannot be known by natural reasoning (for example through empirical knowing). He can only be known by a direct, intuitive connatural experience. Meister Eckhart calls it ‘**knowing of the heart**’. John of the Cross calls it silent, unmediated (by words, thought or images) **contemplative knowledge**. Michael Polanyi calls it ‘**tacit or personal knowledge**’. In the mystical tradition this is the **apophatic way**.

Essence and the Cataphatic way. As humans we are beings, but obviously not pure being like God. We are contingent not necessary beings. We are a particular kind of being, namely human beings with a specific essence, nature, and capacity. Aquinas sees this in terms of **matter** and **form**, matter being ‘potential’ and form being that which brings potential to actualization.

From the point of view of our **essence** we can know something of God through our minds. We do this by knowing the way that God reveals himself to us in the **scriptures** (revelation) and in his **creation** (or nature). As pure being, God is formless and unmanifest. But God becomes manifest in his creation. Creation is the self-giving, self-expression, or self-communication of God. Eckhart uses the word ‘**birthing**’. God gives birth to his very self in his creation. Eckhart uses a small ‘g’ for God in this self-communication. As he puts it:

“.. **Before there were creatures, God was not god, but rather, he was what he was. When creatures came to be and took on creaturely being, then god was no longer God as he is in himself, but god as he is with creatures.**”

Knowing God in this way is called the **cataphatic way**. Some writers express the distinction between apophatic and cataphatic by saying the apophatic way is knowing God from a first-person perspective, the perspective of the ‘**I**’. The cataphatic way is knowing God from a third-person perspective, as consciousness localizes itself in matter. This is the perspective of the ‘**me**’.

THE PRIMACY OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

The upshot of all this is that **consciousness** is the ontological primitive. Consciousness generates mind and brain (these are localizations of consciousness). On the macro scale pure consciousness, Spirit, or God are that in which all beings “live and move and have their being”. It is the **GROUND** (‘**Grunt**’ to use Eckhart’s term) of all creation. Ignatius calls this the **Principle and Foundation**.

At the personal micro-level, my self-reflective consciousness or awareness (my ‘**I**’), is my participation in the pure consciousness of God. Everything in my world takes place in my awareness. That is where it ‘lives and moves and has its being’.

MATERIALIST OBJECTIONS.

Materialists would of course disagree with all of this. They have many objections. Let us look at a few of them and offer brief rebuttals:

This is just pantheism or panpsychism.

NO. Pure Spirit/Consciousness/God transcends the collectivity of beings in consciousness. It is not **panthe-**

ism. Pure consciousness (BEING) transcends localized consciousness. To say that every being is in consciousness is not to say that every being is conscious. It is not **panpsychism**.

It makes reality subjective. It denies scientific objectivity and implies solipsism. Why does our thinking not change reality? Why do we all experience the same reality?

NO. It does not deny objectivity or realism. Everything takes place in consciousness. That is objective reality. And it unfolds in a scientifically rigorous way. That is how consciousness manifests. That is what it is and what it does.

True, individual consciousness can be mistaken. But collective consciousness accounts for why we experience the same reality. To say that reality is in consciousness is not to imply that only what is consciously attended to by an individual creates reality.

“In reality, which means in our actual experience, all experience is one seamless substance. The duality between the inside self and the outside object, world or other, is never actually experienced. It is always imagined.” (Bernardo Kastrup)

“Consciousness is that in which all experience occurs, by which all knowledge is known, and out of which all experience is made.” (Rupert Spira).

Neural correlations in the brain with subjective experience prove that consciousness is generated by the brain. If we influence the working of the brain (e.g. through drugs) we alter human experience.

NO. Do not equate correlation with image. Correlation is not the same as cause. True there can be such influences. But they occur in consciousness. Neural activity is what conscious experience looks like from a second person perspective.

Some experience is unconscious. So the theory implies dualism.

NO. All experience is in consciousness but not all experience is in conscious attention. Some conscious experience can be obfuscated by other forms of attention, just like the light from the stars is eclipsed by the greater light of the sun in the daytime.

Bernardo Kastrup contends that the brain is the image of a process of localization in a stream of transpersonal experiences, like a whirlpool is the image of a process of localization in a stream of water. The brain doesn't generate consciousness for exactly the same reason that a whirlpool doesn't generate water. Active neurons are what experiences look like from the outside, this being the reason why brain function correlates tightly with subjective states.

Eliminative materialists claim that you just compute that you are conscious, but you really aren't. The premise behind this is ludicrous. I can create a computer program that ultimately attributes the logical value 'true' to a variable labeled 'conscious,' but obviously that doesn't take the computer any closer to having inner life the way you and I have, no matter how complex the program is.

The “physical world is a postulated explanatory framework which abstracts certain properties (physical properties) from our experience and thinks of them as existing objectively.” (Keith Ward)

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

This might all sound very, metaphysical, abstract and up in the clouds. What practical use can it be? A lot, as Jesus, St Ignatius and the mystics demonstrate.

A change of mind. It changes my way of seeing and brings about a conversion, (Copernican revolution) or metanoia.

I no longer see God as a being separate from me, living ‘up there in heaven’. He is the very ground of my being. He is the deepest reality of my very self. I cannot exist or find my true self without him.

I see other people not as separate from me. I share the same Spirit with them all. In this Spirit we are all one. Any divisions brought about by race, tribe, gender, culture, ideology etc makes no sense. It is madness.

I ‘find God in all things’ because all beings ‘live and move and have their being’ in the One Being who is God. We are all intricately connected. To destroy creation is to destroy myself, as **Laudato Si** so eloquently puts it.

A change of heart.

To see myself as one with God is to deeply love God. That is what love is; namely, to be one with another. It is the highest stage of classical mysticism, **the unitive stage**.

If I not only see myself as one with others but experience this oneness in my heart, then I love them. That is what love is. It is impossible for me to divide people into different categories and classes and to hate them because of these differences. Every human shares the same spirit with me. At the deepest level he is my brother and sister and I experience him/her as such. This is what the **Contemplation to Attain Love** is about.

To see all being as having their being in the **One Being** who is God, is to ‘**find God in all things**’ as Ignatius instructs us (as indeed, does **Laudato Si**).

How much more loving, just, peaceful and beautiful the world would be if we could practice this. What can be more practical than this?

Fr Roland von Nidda, SJ

Response to Fr Roland von Nidda's Presentation on the Primacy of Consciousness

By Mayamiko Kachipapa

Presented at the Arrupe Symposium, AJU, Harare



Fr Roland von Nidda's paper on consciousness attempts to connect the results of quantum physics and neuroscience with some of the best mystical theology from such writers as Meister Eckhart. Fr. von Nidda tackles the issue of consciousness just where most fear to tread, i.e. on the hard problem of consciousness. The hard problem of consciousness can be put in the form of the following conditional: if it is widely supposed, as on many sci-

entific accounts, that the world is made entirely of mere matter, how, then, could mere matter be conscious?

Fr von Nidda rehearses two of the famous responses to that problem: (1) perhaps there is no consciousness, perhaps consciousness is an illusion (Dennett). But that is counter-phenomenological. We only need to remember Descartes' thought experiment to appreciate how self-defeating that response can be; (2) perhaps consciousness emerges from matter as an epiphenomenon (Dawkins) – but that simply reasserts the question how and why the emergence occurred. Without sufficiently evaluating those views, Fr von Nidda hurries to present the merits of the view he is championing. Fr von Nidda does not present, here, a third alternative – dualism – according to which matter is not the only stuff; there is also a non-material kind of stuff in which consciousness subsists – mind. This third alternative is the one that has generated the mind-body problem and its cognate interaction problem. How does the mind and brain interact, given that they are different kinds?

Fr von Nidda attempts to sidestep these snags by denying the hard problem in the first place. The neat solution, says Fr von Nidda, lies in rejecting the supposition made in the antecedent of the hard problem. The hard problem assumes that matter – or material, concrete things – are primary. Let's call this the common presupposition. The common presupposition is what's false in the materialist model of making sense of reality – and we might progress a better understanding of reality if we reverse the claims for primacy.

According to Fr von Nidda, the mystics – and some versions of idealist philosophies – have for centuries written to disabuse us of the common presupposition that matter is primary – i.e. they taught of the primacy of

consciousness. They taught that Consciousness – and there is what Fr von Nidda calls Pure Consciousness – is the *ground* of all that is. He gives examples of Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart.

Thomas Aquinas starts with noting that every thing in our experience has an essence (what it is, i.e. its nature) and existence (that it is). In the things in our experience, essence and existence are different: we can have an essence that does not exist. Aquinas finds through a sophisticated argument, however, that in God Essence and Existence are identical. This means two things: (i) that God’s essence is to exist and so it is just his nature to exist; (ii) Existence as such is essentially a Godly act. This means all that exist does exist as taking in (or participating in) something of God. This is what we mean when we say that God created the world. And this is how we should understand Meister Eckhart when he says, “God’s existence must be my existence and God’s is-ness is my is-ness”.

So far Fr von Nidda has appropriated the tradition to explain that God is the ground of the material’s existence and so prior and primary. But how are we to connect God to Consciousness? Fr von Nidda does not give an argument for this but goes on to say that human consciousness is just participation in that Pure Consciousness (God) which is prior to the material. He quotes from Rupert Spira that even for us, “consciousness is that in which all experiences of material things occur” – the same structure of argument as in Aquinas and Eckhart. Mystics like Eckhart and Aquinas learn more because they are more aware of that Consciousness.

He then responds to a couple of objections: how is this not a pantheism – seeing the whole world as God, or a pan-psychism – seeing everything, even matter, as conscious? He argues that not everything is conscious; consciousness is not everything, but everything is in consciousness.

The view he is urging, Fr von Nidda claims, reorients our ontology, spirituality and personal lives in a manner that dissolves altogether the hard problem. He claims that a growing number of scientists in quantum physics and neuroscience support this view. But Fr von Nidda does not say what pieces of evidence in quantum physics and neuroscience he refers to. Even if he did, more work would have to be done to stave off numerous other interpretations of the evidence from quantum physics and neuroscience that diverge from his own.

I think there is much that is commendable in Fr von Nidda’s presentation. He presents a fascinating alternative to the positivistic view of reality, of philosophy, religion, personal life and spirituality. Yet Fr von Nidda’s solution does two things objectionable:

It reasserts dualism and pushes back the interaction problem at the level of Pure Consciousness. Recall that

there was an interaction problem between mind and body, consciousness and matter. If the material is in consciousness as finding being in consciousness, we meet the question how the material emerges from the Pure Consciousness in the first place. Fr von Nidda would like us to supply that it was through God's all-powerful creativity – but this supply is external to this debate. It is precisely one principle a positivistic neuroscientist will not accept because it oversteps all methods acceptable to him or her.

It argues that we should replace a whole, multifaceted paradigm of scientific thinking based on the desire to make room for a traditional understanding of God as ground of Being or as Pure Consciousness. I wonder how far this can be sold beyond people of the sort of presuppositions like his. Fr von Nidda has replaced the common presupposition in the hard problem with another presupposition unacceptable on the materialist model.

These features significantly limit the appeal of Fr von Nidda's presentation to those Christians who want to pray to God in the heart despite the constant threat of a materialist objection.

Mayamiko Kachipapa, SJ

Information Processing, the Nervous System And a Computer.



This short article will briefly examine the notion of information processing as understood in the nervous system of most animals. This will be followed by an attempt to show how the nervous system, more so the brain, is analogous to a complex computer. An assessment will then be made before ending with a conclusion.

Information processing according to *Campbell Biology, 10th Edition*, by Jane B. Reece et al., consists of three stages, namely sensory input, integration and motor output. This

information processing is done by neurons. (Jane B. Reece, pp.1063).

Jane B. Reece et al. note that Information processing begins with sensory neurons transmitting external stimuli for instance, light, touch or smell. Alternatively, sensory neurons could transmit internal stimuli for instance muscle tension or blood pressure. Brain neurons (ganglia) then analyze and interpret these sensory inputs in the light of the immediate context and animals' experience. These neurons in the brain are mainly interneurons. Neurons extending from the processing centers then initiate an output. This output could be a muscular or glandular activity. An example is motor neurons which transmit signals onto muscles cells resulting in muscle contraction. (Jane B. Reece, pp.1063).

Jane B. Reece et al. note that the integration function in most animals is done by neurons under the central nervous system (CNS). The remaining neurons that carry information to and from the brain constitute the peripheral nervous system (PNS). Various neurons are adapted for their functions. (Jane B. Reece, pp.1063).

According to the *TextBook of Medical Physiology, 11th Edition*, by Arthur C. Guyton, computers share similarities with the nervous system. The computer input circuits are comparable with the sensory neurons while the computer output circuits are comparable with the motor aspect of the nervous system. Just as in simple computers output signals are directed by input signals, so is the simple spinal reflex action. He argues that in complex computers, output is controlled not only by input signals, but also by information stored in the computer memory. And this he argues, is analogous with the complex reflexes or higher nervous systems. The central processing unit in computers determines the sequence of operations. This central processing unit function is analogous to the brain function mechanism. He argues that the basic components and functioning of a computer are analogous to the human nervous system. In this way a brain, he claims, is a computer that continuously collects

sensory information and uses this in the light of stored information to compute daily bodily activities. (Guyton, pp.558).

From the above discussion, one can infer that information processing is not only a property of biological entities but it is rather present in computers as well. Computer simulations studies could serve as the basis and offer reliable research findings on the Human Brain Project (HBP). Increase in knowledge of neuroscience and neurophysiology could address or resolve or at least shed light on the current heated debates on; dualism versus materialism, nature of mental states, anthropology and the like.

In a word, we have briefly looked at the essential ingredients of Information processing, namely, sensory input, integration and motor output and how they relate. We have compared the nervous system and a computer and found that the brain, by and large is but a computer.

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John Turyakiira, SJ – Student of AJU.

WELCOMING A NEW MEMBER OF STAFF



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Hiking + Watching movies + reading novels

THE POETRY MORNING

The plight of a displaced

(In solidarity with the victims of cyclone Idai)

Can anyone convey the message of my plight to my beloved ones in this merciless natural catastrophe that has left almost nothing, that has left us apart.

Alas! I am banished and left alone, deprived of my own possessions and even the mother land that accepted me and gave refuge, Ah! nothing is left.

I was forced to move from my own home, thinking that all will be well but none gave me refuge.

I have no food to eat, no fresh water to drink, no blanket to cover in the cold, no roof over my head and the list continues.

The pain of separation in my heart increases day by day, I wonder and understand not, I look up for a miracle to happen.

Days and days have passed that I had a glance of my beloved land, my
home, my sweet home – now left in ruins.

I feel lost in an unknown world where strange people dwell and know
not what it means to go through such a pain.

I find no way to come out of this world which is not mine.

My eyes seek and find not my beloved ones; my ears hear yet listen not
their voice.

Mine is a situation that I do not know where and how to find my beloved
ones.

All that I ever cherished, walking proudly in the streets that I grew up,
sweet home that gave me shelter, and the lovely community I be-
longed to, seem no more.

My heart now is alien to me, engulfed by a wanderlust, in search of its
loved ones.

My soul dies of thirst for its beloved to exchange a word of love.

My own strength has gone and I depend on the providence of someone
who is not mine.

I know not what will happen to me in the very next moment, for my life
is not under my control any more.

I fight with God and myself asking why, Why Lord? Why do we undergo
pains and sufferings that are almost unbearable?

I look for a reason and find not; a reason why innocent people suffer and
are victims?

Why humans are reluctant to care about other humans' sufferings? We seek for your aid to begin a new life? Why we seek for your support to start afresh with our pains and sufferings.

In all despair and hopelessness, a dim ray of hope in the Almighty One who is in charge of everything assures me that the golden day will come. I believe and trust in him.

You can become a way to bring the hope of those optimistic golden days to fulfilment; to restore our dignity in some way and what we have lost.

Only God may reward you abundantly, what we can offer you, are our ceaseless prayers.

Petras George, SJ

THE PASCHAL PATTERN OF OUR LIFE.



Wow! What life-giving words Jesus uttered when he said “Unless a seed falls and dies there is no life, but when it dies a new life sprouts out of it, it brings a new life.”

Such is the paschal pattern of our mortal lives, to have a life we have to die over and over.

Then only new life will spring forth. That will be a unique life, a life that is eternal, everlasting.

In this earthly life sorrows, sufferings, pains, obstacles, difficulties and challenges will accompany us, but to endure them patiently will bring us life that has no end.

Ah! The best instance of all is to have a glance at the earthly life of God (Jesus) himself.

Look at Jesus’ whole life, he just simply lived for others and at the end what good reward was given to him. Alas! A shameful death.

He suffered unjustly for our sins. He died so

that there would be eternal life after his wondrous Resurrection.

It is in our lives too, that we suffer in order to become ever better humans

Christ like.

(Spot check:)

Remember in your life any event that caused you much suffering and lot of pain. Then turn back to senses and reassess that now at present time, do you have the same amount of pain from the same incident. Perhaps not at all, then mind you!

How much that has helped you to become better, to better cope in future and to grow in life.

(Message: In life learn to die, if you haven't yet.)

To be a Christian is to follow the footsteps of our Blessed Lord. But, actually, to follow Christ is not that easy, one has to die to himself and bring life to others and to himself, in order to have life.

This is what the Lenten season teaches us. To follow Christ more closely, to love him more intensely, and to reverence him at all times.

Petras George, SJ

The ARRUIPEINSIDER team would like to thank all those who contributed articles for this edition and invites more contributions from all members of Arrupe Jesuit University for the upcoming edition.

The articles may include:

POEMS, JOKES, GOSSIP, HUMOUR AND CARTOONS

APOSTOLATE, SPIRITUAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

CLUBS, PROGRESS REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

MOTIVATIONAL STORIES AND PUZZLES

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