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Fully Human and Fully Alive

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Dr Cyril Desbruslais SJ has done yeomen service to thousands of youths and students of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth and Pune. He was an inspiring teacher, effective mentor and practical philosopher. Through his lectures and plays, he has shaped the destiny of many young men and women.

To honour him on his 80th birthday (DoB: 21 December 1940), some of his friends and colleagues have put out this volume. It highlights Cyril's main vision and articulates his insight on life.

He has been fond of quoting repeatedly St Irenaeus of Lyons, "The glory of God is humans fully alive." Throughout his career, he has struggled to bring out the liberative dimension of every ideology, vision and system. He has also tried to make us more human and humane.

One of his most inspiring courses and books is *Philosophy of Liberation*, for which he has taken insights from Theology of Liberation. Through other courses, like "Hunger and Violence," "Philosophy of Technology," "Postmodernity," "Existentialism," and "Ethics," he has striven to radiate a

vision of human beings who are freedom from shackles of poverty, injustice and ignorance.

As such this books want to evoke the meaning, message and vision of Cyril Desbruslais. As a person, he has been remarkably forthright and articulate in his view for a more humane and liberative understanding of God and of human beings. As a philosopher, he was amazingly critical of the structure and ideology that dehumanise us. As a playwright, he was been extraordinarily creative in inspiring the young minds to love the world and experience the fullness of life, which definitely includes the experience of the Divine.

Structure of the Book

This book seeks to understand Cyril's passionate search for truth and life, by focussing on the main aspects of his own thinking and living. It contains 36 articles and a brief writeup on Cyril's life.

a. Seeking Holistic Liberation

Keeping in mind Desbruslais' passion for philosophy, the articles are divided into five parts. The first part deals with his philosophy of liberation. Drawing from liberation theology and convinced that India needs a philosophy (not theology) of liberation, he has been advocating a philosophy that humanises, empowers and liberates. He could trace the liberating and dehumanising potential in every attempt at philosophising, thinking and being. So his advocacy for a philosophy that enables and inspires everyone, especially the disadvantaged and the marginalised.

This section begins with an article by Errol Fernandes SJ, Vice Principal (Commerce), St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, who explores Jesus also brought about liberation from social and structural sin. This liberation was in order to free those who

encountered him to love as they are loved. The next article by Thomas Karimundackal SJ, Scriptural Studies, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, focuses on the hermeneutic study of Jesus' visit to Nazareth, his home town, from the perspective of liberation. Next, Patricia Santos RJM, Faculty of Theology, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune integrates and builds on some of the varied aspects of flourishing as reflected in the different disciplines of philosophy, psychology, education, anthropology, ecology and spirituality from a feminist theological perspective in order to present a synthesized theological understanding of flourishing as fullness of life for all.

The succeeding article of Anil Thomas CM, Department of Systematic Theology, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, studies the change that Vatican II has brought about in the perception of liberating mission and how this new understanding of mission has been at the heart of many documents of Vatican II as well as the teachings of all post-conciliar Popes.

Next Lawrence S. Fernandes SJ, Principal, Sacred Heart College, Satya Nilayam, Chennai argues that education is and can be a source of empowerment and liberation taking the cases of Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar. This is followed by Dolichan Kollareth SJ, Dept of Social Sciences, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, who advocates from a liberation psychology, inspired by Ignacio Martín-Baró SJ, for whom , the ultimate purpose of the discipline of psychology should be the liberation of the oppressed people. Next Sathya Balan, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune explores Heidegger's invitation to think deeply and radically to be freed from the clutches of practical and calculative thinking in our hyperactive society to emancipatory meditative thinking.

The last article in this section is by Joby Tharamangalam OP, Research Scholar, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, who attempts to discern the liberating face of God in the midst of our temptation to make GODS in our own image.

b. Socially Committed

The second Part dwells on his social concerns. Fascinated by Second Vatican Council of the Church and by 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, he has been an ardent advocate for the cause of the poor and the exploited. He has stood for a Church that stands for and with the weak, as did Fr Pedro Arrupe in the 1980s and Pope Francis today. Together with his colleagues, George Soares-Prabhu and Francis D'Sa, he has been in the forefront in Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth's attempt to change the society structurally.

The first article by Roy J. Pereira, SJ, St Xavier's College, Mumbai, interprets the parable of the Good Samaritan, from the perspective of the youth, to whom Desbruslais has dedicated his whole life. Next, Educationist and Biodiversity Conservator, Hector Andrade, provides hope for the ecological crisis that we are all facing. In the subsequent article, S. Stephen Jayard, Professor of Science, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India outlines a "seasoned" spirituality for today's youth. Job Kozhamthadam SJ, Director, Indian Institute of Science and Religion, New Delhi, investigates the significant role that science plays in the modern India, which helps in the emergence of a new world-view. This is followed by the plea of Kuruvilla Pandikattu, Dean, Faculty of Philosophy, JDV, Pune, to understand and appreciate the mystery of evil in our highly complex world.

The next article by researcher and publisher Joji Valli shows that relationship and responsibility are hallmarks of human existence because life is a gift and a one-time opportunity, in the context of corporate social responsibility. VM Jose SJ,

Moral and Pastoral Theology, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, deliberates on the life of physically challenged people, enabling them to live happy and fulfilled lives. The last two articles takes up specific problems which Desbruslais would be very much involved in. That of feminine entry into the Ayyappa temple by Sacaria Joseph, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata and Anuradha Mazumder, Prafulla Chandra College, Kolkata. James Ponniah, University of Chennai deals with the question of refugees and religion.

c. Open to Difference and Dissent

The third Part invites us to respect difference and affirm dissent in view of fostering freedom, pluralism and diversity. Recognising that India is a land of plurality (of religions, cultures, languages, etc.) Desbruslais has been keen to foster a liberal mentality of openness, courage and conviction. Such a search will unsettle the settled and naturally create trouble and tension. So this section represents the convinced and committed rebel that Cyril is. He is a prophet who would courageously criticise the structural sins of the society and stand for the rights of the poor and those who are different.

In the first article, Gnana Patrick, Department of Christian Studies, University of Madras argues that religious pluralism cannot be grasped deeply in a-historical manner; it needs, on the other hand, a context-specific exploration in order to make meaningful statements upon it. The next one by M.X. Gnanadhas, Research Scholar, University of Innsbruck, Austria, identifies and analyses the varieties of epistemic injustice, which are prevalent all over the world especially in the arena of gender and race. Next, Paul Thelakat, Chief Editor, *Light of Truth*, Ernakulam ruminates on the meaning of human

lives provided by religions and on the role of images and temples as possible scandals.

In a similar vein, Victor Ferrao, Dean of Studies, Rachol Seminary, Goa reflects on spectres of Hinduism from postmodern perspectives. Three young and promising scholars, Suchetana Banerjee, Gayatri Mendanha and Ananya Dutta, Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts, Pune dwells on Symbol and Anti-Text with Satire and Blake: Image Similarly, Sacaria Joseph, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, points out the difficulties to relate Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* with freedom of speech and expression. The final article in this section is on ambiguity in philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's understanding of "bad faith" or "*mauvaise foi*".

d. Towards Fuller Living

The fourth Part invites the reads to experience fuller living both personally and socially. Desbruslais has been pleading for fuller life, which recognises the brokenness and vulnerabilities of ordinary human beings. Still he is able to recognise the potential that each one of us is capable of individually and collectively. So the invitation to affirm life in its abundance and seek joy in everything and everyone.

This section begins with an article by Libin Joseph CST, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Rome. Basing himself on Martin Seligman and William James, he argues that teleological perspective is a guiding map for a meaningful life and that 'the meaning of life' consists in responding optimistically and creatively to the struggles of life with purposes. Another young and enthusiastic research scholar from Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth meditates on a quote which Desbruslais, borrowing from Gabriel Marcel, is fond of: "Life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be lived." A former college of Desbruslais, Subhash Anand, Professor

(Emeritus), Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, explores the symbolic connection between symbols and rights and their significant role in religions. This is followed by an article on human dignity by J. Charles Davis, Humboldt Research Fellow, Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany. He locates the human dignity in the human body, moving away from our rational capacities.

Next, Nishant A Irudayadason, Professor of Ethics at JDV, Pune, relates discourse ethics with ethics of liberation, by creative interpretation of Karl-Otto Apel and Enrique Dussel. This is followed by another article on the role of human beings in the universe. Isaac Parackal OIC, Professor of Metaphysics, JDV, is inspired by A.R Peacocke and explores our ecological relationship to the universe. The final article by Ginish Cheruparambil, Christ University (Deemed), Lavasa, Maharashtra studies Social Progress Index (SPI) as alternative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and *Human Development Index (HDI)*, a topic significant to appreciate collective human progress and liberation.

e. The Concluding Articles

The final Part focusses on the message, philosophy and person of Desbruslais. Here we study the unique contribution to Desbruslais to the society at large and the Indian Church in particular.

Rajan J. Barrett, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda Vadodara , Gujarat, traces the development of Cyril Desbruslais S.J. as a playwright who has a predilection for a German theatre practitioner and playwright Bertolt Brecht. It also looks at what I term as ‘Minority Theatre’ because it works for a minority community. G. Lazar SVD, Director, SANSKRUTI, Hyderabad, investigates Desbruslais’ approach to virtues and values and shows that Desbruslais holds on to the basic goodness of human beings, in spite of our failures and

vulnerabilities. Then V. Y. Dasappan SJ, Principal, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram, encounters Desbruslais as a "Philosopher with Angel's Wings." He traces the Jesuit vision of art and theatre through the lens of Desbruslais' plays. In this spirit, Babu Joseph Karakombil SVD, Director, Satprachar Press, Indore, M.P investigates the "Life-World" (*Lebenswelt*) of Cyril Desbruslais. The final article by Cedric Prakash, a Jesuit social activist from Gujarat and an ardent admirer of Desbruslais. He sees the life and message of Cyril as being fully young and alive, by being with the young, challenging and inspiring them.

As already mentioned, Cyril Desbruslais has been repeatedly fond of quoting St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c 120-200), "the glory of God is man fully alive," we have taken this quote to sum up Desbruslais' philosophical life and horizon. In all his work, he has been trying to deepen the human beings dignity, freedom and nobility so that we can be truly in touch with God. We can truly glorify God by becoming genuinely ourselves more and more. By reaching out to others, loving them deeply and embracing and empowering them, we become more human and give glory to God. This explains title of this volume, *Fully Human and Fully Alive*.

The book contains messages from 11 eminent persons, including Rev Fr Arturo Sosa SJ, who says that Cyril was a "friend, philosopher and guide to innumerable young people in Pune." In the Foreword Rev Dr Libsert D'Souza SJ calls Cyril a "wonderful human being." One of his students Dr Shashi Tharoor holds: "I was influenced and inspired by the Jesuit Fathers in my school life. Among them I always love to mention Dr Cyril Desbruslais."

May this volume be a modest contribution, inspired by Dr Cyril Desbruslais SJ, to foster a shared and collective life of love, joy, peace and freedom! May we be inspired by his life to enable and empower the weak and to dedicate ourselves fully to remove the tears from the faces of the marginalised and to contribute to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all, especially the youth, for whom Desbruslais has a special devotion.

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ (ed) *Fully Human and Fully Alive: Essays on Being Human Today in Honour of Dr Cyril Desbruslais SJ*, New Delhi/Pune: Christian World Imprints & Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, pp. 498+xxx; Rs 900