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The recent murder of a Jesuit priest Fr. Marcelo Perez in Chiapas, Mexico is another martyrdom of a social activist in line with Fr. Stan Swamy in India who died a custodial death three years ago. While deaths are mourned by the dear ones, martyrdom in Christianity is always an exhibition of valour and courage and a witness for the life that Jesus lived in this world. It is for a cause and it is a grace to die a martyr. Though people may think and write that Jesuits are shocked and are grieving about it, which may also be true to some extent, it is indeed a proud moment for all the Jesuits to witness to another valiant Jesuit giving his life for his people; that one more Jesuit walked the path of Jesus; the same path thousands of Jesuits walked ever since the Jesuits came into follow the path of justice and peace. Peace and harmony are not possible without the presence of justice has been proved again in the murder of Fr. Marcelo.

Fr. Marcelo, like Fr. Stan Swamy advocated indigenous and labour rights in his mission place. He was the third Jesuit to be assassinated in Mexico in the last two year according to reports. While it raises concerns about the escalating violence against the marginalized in Mexico as in India, it at the same time throws a great opportunity for Jesuits to take up the mantle that Fr. Marcelo has left behind. His mission crossed the spiritual boundaries and extended into social, economic, cultural and political rights of the indigenous communities in the southern part of Mexico. Liberation is not one-dimensional; it is multi-dimensional, integral and total.

The deaths of Frs. Stan Swamy and Marcelo open us to a newer dimension of martyrdom. It need not be only for the defence of the faith of one's religion and its founder. Today, martyrdom is intrinsically related to justice and peace. We have examples of modern martyrs who have paid the price for their liberative mission. Salvation and liberation are the two sides of the same coin as proved by our great Jesuits Stan Swamy and Marcelo.

When John De Britto was martyred, his mother in Portugal on hearing his martyrdom celebrated and offered a thanksgiving mass as the tradition goes. Today the mothers of Stan Swamy and Marcelo must sure be celebrating the bravery of their sons for following Jesus in His liberative mission.

Modern day martyrs are those who walk with the marginalized. When we can have a "Saint of the Gutters" we can also have "Martyrs of the Marginalized". This makes sense for the third world countries where majority of the people are poor and marginalized.

Dr. Selvaraj Arulnathan SJ
Director

RECENT EVENT

Welcome to Fr. Denzil Fernandes SJ, who's appointed as head for Peace and Reconciliation Unit

Dr. Denzil Fernandes SJ is a Jesuit priest belonging to the Goa Jesuit Province. He is currently the Head of the Peace and Reconciliation Unit of Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, from June 2024. Earlier, he served as the Executive Director of Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, for 8 years from 2015-2023. He was also the Editor of the quarterly journal, Social Action, a University Grants Commission (UGC) approved social science journal from 2015-2023. He holds two post graduate degrees in Economics and Politics from the University of Pune. He was awarded Ph.D. in Social Sciences from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, in 2012 for his work on "Social Networks in the Construction Labour Market in Goa".

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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DEMOCRACY - One day Consultation with NGO partners of South India

The Indian Social Institute, Bangalore (ISI B), widely known for its 'Training and Resource' based engagement, organized a 'One-day Consultation with like-minded NGO partners of South India' on 'Basic Capacity Building of Rural Youth' in South India. this consultation was held on June 22, 2024 at ISI premises. This basic module of 6 different training programs will span for two years, 2024-2026.

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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DEMOCRACY - Learned to Build Self and Live Together

The three-day training program organised by the Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru on Self and Society had a profound impact on 40 young trainees who became aware of their role in family and society. Through the workshop, the young youth engaged individually and in group reflecting on their strengths, weaknesses, and dreams for one self and society. This process of knowing oneself and society helped the participants develop self-awareness, self-confidence, self-esteem and leadership attitudes.

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Peace & Reconciliation Unit - Screening of "Democracy in Debt" at ISI Bangalore

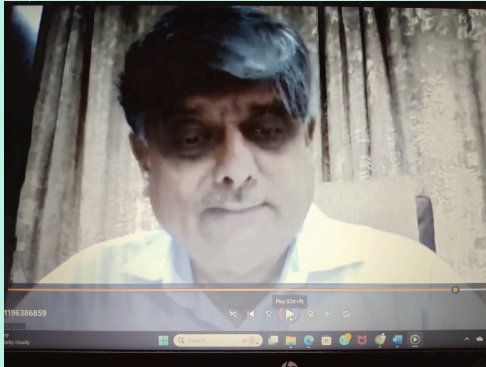
The South Asia Peace Action Network (SAPAN) has organised global community special screenings of the 25 minute documentary titled "Democracy in Debt: Sri Lanka Beyond the Headlines" by Beena Sarwar at a number of venues in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Australia, Canada, U.K., USA and other countries from 13-21 September ahead of Presidential elections in Sri Lanka scheduled on 21st September, 2024. The documentary presents an opportunity to discuss the socio-economic and political scenario in Sri Lanka, which is relevant to similar situations elsewhere.

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HENRY VOLKEN – STAN SWAMY MEMORIAL LECTURE 2024

Henry Volken – Stan Swamy Memorial Lecture, an annual feature of Indian Social Institute, Bangalore (ISI B) was held on September 13, 2024, Friday at Romero Auditorium of the premise at 4:00 pm. Hon'ble Justice Kurian Joseph, retired judge of the Supreme Court of India was the chief guest who delivered the memorial lecture. Mr. Salil Shetty responded to the lecture and Ms. Brinda Adige, a member of ISI B Governing Board moderated the session.

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Peace & Reconciliation Unit - ISI Bangalore Celebrates International Day of Peace

The Peace and Reconciliation Unit of Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru, in collaboration with the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA) Peace and Reconciliation Network organised an hour long online celebration of the International Day of Peace on 21st September, at 4.00 pm. The programme began with a video on the "Culture of Peace" and a welcome address by Mr. Amith Pereira. Dr. Denzil Fernandes SJ, the Head of the Peace and Reconciliation Unit, was the moderator of the programme. In his introductory address, he reminded the audience that this year marked the 25th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which recognised that peace is not only the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.

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Peace & Reconciliation Unit - National Seminar on "Building a Culture of Reconciliation and Peace in India"

Indian Social Institute (ISI), Bengaluru, hosted and organised the National Seminar on "Building a Culture of Reconciliation and Peace in India" in collaboration with National Council for Reconciliation and Peace (NCRP), Loyola Institute of Peace and International Relations (LIPI), Kochi, and Catholic Religious of India (CRI), Frazer Town, on 2nd October, 2024, the India celebrated Gandhi Jayanti, the United Nations celebrated the International Day of Non-Violence and ISI celebrated the first anniversary of its Peace and Reconciliation Unit.

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