

INDEPENDENCE DAY 2021

Message from the Manager, Fr. Richard Vaz

Dear Principal Dr. Padmanabha Rath, Treasurer Fr. Donald Lobo, Sisters, Teachers, Students, Parents and Friends,

My heartfelt wishes to one and all on 75th Independence Day of our country. Second consecutive year with heads held high we are celebrating this day to pay tribute to all the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the nation and especially to our frontline warriors in the battle against the CORNOA-19. Our national flag continues to inspire all the citizens to keep the nation first before all other selfish aspirations and desires.

Let me read out for you the poem written by Tagore:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free; Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls; Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection; where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit; where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake."

"That heaven of freedom, let my country awake", where is that heaven, the dreamland if not on earth that we live, where is the consciousness and awareness among us that we still continue to live amidst fear and threats not from any foreign forces but from within. India did gain independence in 1947, but it would be ridiculous to say that freedom has been safeguarded till now. What kind of freedom do we have in India today? The mind is certainly not without fear here. Innocent people are picked up on mere suspicion, incarcerate them without any proof of wrongdoing, and keep on stonewalling them to prevent them getting justice, we must all be afraid. Many are languishing in our filthy prisons deprived of freedom without trial for petty offences but who are these, they are mostly poor, illiterate and from under privileged communities. Besides these, we have a list of activists, student leaders, scholars and journalists who have continued to suffer prolonged incarceration and how their applications for bail or quashing of FIRs have been pending without hearing for long periods of time before different courts. This is India today.

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana on last Friday, 6th August said, "There are several cases in the country which involve gangsters and where high-profile people are accused. Judges are threatened mentally also by sending messages on Whatsapp, SMS or on Youtube. This is a new trend in this country. When high-profile people don't get favourable orders, they start maligning the judges on all forum," he lamented that

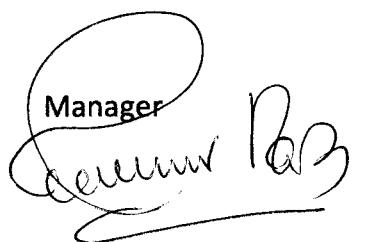
Intelligence Bureau (IB), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and police are not helping the judiciary at all.” He further said police stations pose the “highest threat” to human rights and dignity, which are ‘sacrosanct’. Isn’t this more frightening and threatening than foreign attackers and corona virus?

Today dictatorial attitude of rulers is leading India to age of uncertainty. Rajdeep Sardesai, Senior journalist and consulting editor of ‘India Today group’ said that people were being tried for sedition or anti national activities after they criticize government’s policies as if the government and nation was the same thing. Expressing his concerns over it, he, however, showing optimism said that this was not the first time when the country witnessed such situation. Since Independence the country has gone through such circumstances several times and the masses have always shown the door to people responsible for it, he said.

Dear members of Arnold’s family and my listeners, even today in small or big way we are fighting for our freedom — the freedom to consume the food of our choice, the freedom to express our sexuality, freedom of speech, the freedom to be left alone, freedom from class oppression. The sad truth is that we or governments elected by us have crippled our individual freedom in the name of knowing and doing what's best for us ‘as a nation’.

For citizens of a country that fought for its own independence successfully 74 years ago with the weapon of non-violence, we have been surprisingly slow to embrace the concept of freedom. Let us vow to respect the privacy and freedom of every person and promise under this national flag, a “symbol of Freedom, courage and inspiration” that we shall defend the freedom and dignity of every person on the sacred soil of Bharat Mata. HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY.

God bless our country, God bless Saint Arnold’s School. Jai Hind

Manager

15.08.2021