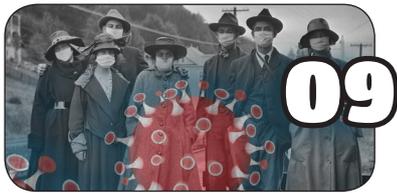


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Publisher says...

WE HAVE A BOUNDEN DUTY MAKE THIS 'HAVOCKED HOME' BACK INTO A 'HOME OF HOPE'

Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI

The pandemic represents the permanent threat to the whole world, labelled as the worst social shockwave and the unprecedented economic down turn in recent history. Sri Lanka with this viral outbreak like the similar middle-income countries is also most vulnerable where the economic tremor is already felt and its severe assault may be expected to be significantly direct and indirect. The scarcities or the fear of such possibilities are what has created part of the havoc. However, the human potential is to win these hurdles of life with hope and courage. This edition of Social Justice, its 201st volume has thematized this very notion that if there is havoc then there is hope with all human imagination and effort.

The life styles have been changed too, some people for two + years have not seen their friends and family living overseas and just beginning to normalize but not without anxieties and fears. The teachers and students have been aloof from primary school to the postgraduate students in universities managing through just with cloud technology devising different platforms of communication. Many national and international symposia, conferences have been held in similar methods and media. The havoc hit the core of every single stratum of life and living from a new born to the oldest civilian cutting short his/her life grossly terminating the fondness of the grand children with their grandparents. Complete havoc has caused in the traditional households and wonder about possible alternatives to reconnect and relate like before.

The psychosocial impact is not even being assessed and what we hear and read are predictions and possible psychosomatic scenarios yet to be addressed. The religious traditions are still struggling to make sense of the havoc that the pandemic caused even though they have been the traditional institutions that provided a pathway to hope. But in this specific instance of the pandemic, they too have been in the back burner or relatively dormant not being able to express fully and boldly what the pandemic meant in terms of their theologies and religious teachings. God-talk should happen in times of havoc as such is potentially a hopeful moment as per of the Sacred scriptures and tradition, but it seems like they are yet to discover what the Sacred means and does in times of pollution/havoc.

The pandemic caused many redundancies in employment

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Publisher says: **WE HAVE A BOUNDEN DUTY ...**

sector with less or no social security and benefits, making workers vulnerable and without proper alternatives to face the economic downturn. However, this crisis is not felt by everyone in equal terms as much as the poorest of the poor who especially live on their daily or weekly earnings. As a result, this inequality and the gap between the haves and the have nots is expected to increase unless right fiscal measures are placed within the national budgetary system to support the economically weak and the marginalized. They say that the national budget arguably indicates the priorities of a government in power. The pandemic has embarrassed the governments, institutions, religious traditions, preachers, teachers, financiers, social planners and the ordinary parents with no answers to their children of their beliefs and even their highly held sublime values.

The pandemic did create real and raw havoc as if that it is left to us now because our archaic beliefs and systems have suddenly stopped – in real *havoc*. So, we have to re-

commence with *havoc* amidst us but a new start for which we need to 'buy hope' from within ourselves because humans must believe in the future. What else do they have I wonder in the middle of the *havoc*.

The Structural Adjustment Programmes proposed by the global financial institutions and the UN led Millennium Development Goals too have been challenged by 'stunted planning' and 'delays in operations' with 'sluggish financing' of course. These anyway have not brought sense to the notion of 'sovereign development' as they have dented people's steady income patterns and shutting auxiliary income accesses opened to their related livelihoods into serious socio-economic jeopardy. It is in this context that people suspect the alleged plans to acquire land in urban and rural areas in the coastal belt in Sri Lanka for development projects displacing the traditional inhabitants of the land. Unchecked development, de facto has brought us havoc too, but learning quickly can make us hopeful for a humanized format of development processes.

Lastly the Glasgow's UN summit of COP26 in early November 2021 reiterated robustly that the 'fragile planet now demands' a major and quick attention of humanity, and it affirmed that 'people are part of nature' and with their 'rational insights' could preserve this 'sensitive balance' between what 'we produce and consume'. It is now known that what we 'produce in abundance' as well as what we 'consume recklessly' both can 'bring callous impact on the environment'. This ecological havoc is more than any other factor has devastating effects on the planet and its biodiversity as it's the 'home we live' (*Laudato Si*, Pope Francis, June 2015) that we have thoroughly neglected. So now that we are aware of it, and we have a bounden duty make this 'havocked home' back into a 'home of hope' even if we are late to rebuild it for ourselves, yet must opt to do so for the future generations. Failing which they will name us as a 'hopeless generation' that 'preferred to live in havoc'.

