



PRESIDENT

Jesuit Conference of South Asia

POSA Circular 2021/7
6 July, 2021

To,
All the Major Superiors

Dear Brothers,
Greetings!

I write this letter with a deep sense of pain and anguish at the loss of Fr Stan Swamy who has gone to his Eternal Home. In his death, we, the Jesuits of India, have lost a courageous, committed and compassionate elder brother, who lived and worked selflessly for the mission of the Society of Jesus: reconciliation and justice. He championed the noble ideals of love and compassion, equality and justice, truth and peace, and sacrificed his life for them. He is an example for us to emulate and become effective Jesuits in our life and mission.

Fr Stan had deep love for Jesus and the poor. This made him see, judge and act differently. He embraced a simple life and worked tirelessly for the rights of the poor Dalits and indigenous peoples. Right up to his last breath, imprisoned and deprived of basic human rights, he still continued to march in solidarity with the marginalized people of our times. Therefore, even as we mourn his undeserved, untimely and unjust demise, we shall still celebrate his life wholly dedicated to the service of the last, the least and the lost.

It is true that Fr Stan is no more and we are deeply troubled at the death of Fr Stan. However, a person like Fr Stan cannot die. He will rise in the lives of people and in the struggles for justice and peace. He will raise a generation of people with conscience and commitment to take up the work among the underprivileged.

I share the sorrow of Fr Stan's family members, friends and collaborators. My heartfelt condolences to Fr Jerome Cutinha and the Jamshedpur Jesuits.

On behalf of the Conference, I thank all people of good will, the advocates, the doctors and the human rights activists who stood by him and extended him all solidarity and support. I specially thank Fr Joseph Xavier and his team who worked with total dedication for the release of Fr Stan from the prison, and the Province of Bombay and specially Fr Fraser Mascarenhas for accompanying Fr Stan during his last journey. May the Good Lord reward all these good Samaritans.

The death of Fr Stan is not the end, but the beginning of a fresh impetus for justice and freedom. It is a *kairos* moment for us to read the signs of the times and to respond to them. It is an opportunity for us to pause, ponder and proceed boldly on our way of proceeding. It is an occasion for us to discern, decide and dedicate ourselves to our mission of reconciliation and justice as Fr Stan did. Let us pray for the grace of



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discernment and holy boldness. May the courage and fortitude of Fr Stan inspire us to deepen our faith and hope for a new desire, a new purpose and a new future.

At a later date, let us meet for a while to pay a tribute to Fr Stan and to draw lessons from his life and death. Now let us spend our time in mourning his death and praying for eternal rest to his soul. While mourning and praying for Fr Stan let us also remember to pray with Rabindranath Tagore, “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high...Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

In solidarity,

Stany D. Souza SJ
POSA

