



PRESIDENT Jesuit Conference of India

National Justice Day

28 July 2021

Press Release

To pay our deep respects to Fr. Stan Swamy SJ and carry forward his legacy, we, the concerned citizens of India, stand in solidarity to observe 28 July 2021 as a **National Justice Day**.

Amidst growing inequalities, violence, atrocities, discrimination and exclusion in our country, “not to be a silent spectator” is the message that Stan Swamy left for us. He inspired us to sing the values of the Preamble to the Constitution of our country - Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity - amidst the adversities, as “the caged bird can still sing and sing in chorus.” As a Jesuit, he committed himself to walk with the excluded, whose dignity is violated, in a mission of Reconciliation and Justice.

Stan’s death is not an end; it is yet another moment of awakening in our journey to affirm our faith in the Constitution of our country. Stan has joined the company of Adivasi martyrs and all those who sacrificed their lives to protect the secular and democratic fabric and diverse cultures of our nation. Stan’s death is a moment of deep consolation, as he has united people across cultures, religions and nationalities to walk boldly and courageously in the path of justice to human family and creation.

Stan Swamy stands tall today as an icon of justice to the marginalized. In his death, he has risen in the hearts of many as a cult figure. Through his lifelong accompaniment of the Adivasis, Dalits and marginalized communities and by his martyrdom, he has given us a new ethical mandate to be compassionate, to be the voice of the voiceless and defenders of human rights, speaking truth to power.

At this moment, we profoundly acknowledge and affirm his prophetic spirit that urges us to demand justice for Stan and all the accused in Bhima Koregaon case. Insistently we ask the Central Government, to free the human rights defenders and the under-trial prisoners languishing in jails in appalling conditions and, above all, to defend democracy, to repeal Sedition Law, Unlawful Atrocities (Prevention) Act, and repressive State laws and to restore citizens’ right to dissent. On this day, we give to ourselves this mandate.

Trusting in the immense power of God and together with all people of goodwill, we sing in chorus the words of Rabindranath Tagore: “Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

Dr. Stanislaus D Souza SJ
Jesuit Provincial of India
28 July 2021

