

## Fth Joe Pereira in Melbourne

*(Fth Joe Pereira is a member of the Guiding Board of the WCCM, a Catholic Archdiocesan priest of Bombay, and instructor of Iyengar yoga. He widely uses yoga and meditation in the treatment of addictions.)*

Nearly 80 people from the **Iyengar Yoga** association and the Christian Meditation community and other interested members of the public, gathered at St Peter's Eastern Hill Church hall in Melbourne, on Friday 12 March to hear Father Joe Pereira speak about his work as the Director of 52 KRIPA centres in India. Fr Joe is also the Christian Meditation National Coordinator in India.

KRIPA, which means in the original Sanscript, God's Grace, is the longest running non government program in India (since 1981) dedicated to rehabilitating alcoholics and drug addicts and helping people live with HIV/AIDS. The methodology includes a twelve step program underpinned by meditation in the John Main tradition and the practice of **Iyengar Yoga**, which practice uses the body in the pursuit of holiness. A method that promotes inner calmness, self awareness and harmony – attributes that are destroyed by the use of alcohol and drugs.

In 1972 Fr Joe was floundering in his vocation as a priest and was on the point of leaving the priesthood when he met Mother Theresa. Wait another ten years she counselled, and at the end of that time KRIPA came into being.

Fr Joe emphasised that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and should be treated with respect as a creation of God. Yoga is all about inviting God and man to be one. And that we carry this transcending potential in ourselves, in the wisdom of the body. So we need to give the suffering addict a sense of connectivity, which is accomplished through cellular consciousness – our minds may lead us astray but our body never lies.

When we encounter a sickness, we must face it and go into it, creating pain to take away pain, to create a feeling of well-being that will create a sense of happiness. The aim is to reach a state of whole body hypo metabolic condition, which state of

consciousness lowers BP and shuts down the overactive left hand brain.

However, there are three conditions which inhibit the pursuit of heart centeredness, ie an egoless state; the overactive intellectualised mind, ie the 'monkey mind' syndrome; the emotionally disturbed mind, and the outright psychotic.

Our biggest problem is that we do not know how to rest. We need to do 'nothing', to know how to do something. We must be ready like a child to let go. If we are not relaxed we have not yet surrendered to God and let go our self control. It is all about celebrating life. Cardinal Newman said that we should not fear death, rather we should fear that on our deathbed we should realise that we have never lived.

And for Fr Joe, in God's grace he believes that **Iyengar Yoga** is his way to Christ, this and the Eucharist, is the centre of his life.

Barbara (Rossall-Wynne)



Fr. Joe and visitor to his talk on 12th March in Victoria