

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Friends

Let me wish you Merry Christmas and peace filled New Year 2012. *'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'* Jn.1/14. May the Word made flesh-Jesus Christ dwell in you and fill you with true joy and healing of your body and mind.



It is one more Christmas. In no time the long awaited day will be gone. Then what happens? Just the same! After few days, the world will celebrate one more New Year. My question is what the every year Christmas has to do with us, with our life? Nothing great is going to happen. Friends' visit, exchange of gifts or greeting cards, dress, house decoration with good old crib, Christmas tree, colourful lights... but what do all these tell us? Do they have any meaning in our life?

Just couple of days ago I was driving in the Bangalore city, I was nearing Hudson Circle, I sighted two eunuchs walking to every car and vehicle asking for alms. These individuals were looking big, well grown but with unhappy faces.. One lady (though they are of 3rd sex, still to the society they are addressed as females) approached me. Looking at me in priestly dress, she hesitated to stretch out her hands. I rather lifted up my hand and said, "God bless you". Immediately she clothed herself with a jewel of joy and tranquillity and said, "thank you Father" and moved away.

Have you any time questioned yourself,' why do they beg although they apparently look well built?

Once I was walking towards Vatican Basilica in Rome on a Sunday. A certain man well dressed but missing something in his face, begged me for Italian Lira. I asked him, 'What do you need?' He replied, 'Father, today Sunday I need money to eat and drink'. I offered him some money, but he refused to receive it for it was less for him as he felt. Then I gave little more. He said thanks and went off.

Now what is Christmas for this type of people? Is Jesus really born for them?

My own sister is almost sick, she had a brain stroke, unable to walk and talk on her own. She has been in the religious life for more than 35 years... now she feels lifeless, although she longs deep within to talk and walk normally, she can't. Occasionally she laughs instinctively and she outbursts in tears.

Many are in hospitals longing to get out of that sickly atmosphere, but they can't. They are battling for life. Many are in jails battling for life of freedom. Many are in mental asylums battling for life of normalcy but they all can't claim what they had some time ago. Many in the field of flesh trade... they are pushed into it... Many are thrown as untouchables, outcasts, abandoned in the society although they are human beings...

Upset over her mother chiding her for long conversations in the bathroom on the mobile phone, a 14- year old girl Sumaya, a class 7th student at a government school on Lalbagh Road, Bangalore has committed suicide by hanging herself. Like this case, every day number of suicide attempts, suicide death keep occurring in and around the City.

Now ask yourself what is Christmas for them... Is God born on earth to bring good tidings to them? Good life to them? Jesus was born in Bethlehem 2010 years ago.... Is his birth still valid today?

In Japan, a Christmas tree has been made of 12 kilo of pure gold. It is 8 ft tall. The international commercial companies will make anything to attract people towards Christmas shopping... so one thing is clear, Christmas enhances business, it promotes consumerism...

Hence Christmas today has more commercial value than human and spiritual value. But it is futile to blame the birth of the Saviour. What, but, we need is the Jesus centred Christmas. His incarnation is to be celebrated with a renewed spirit of humanity. A right understanding of the historical birth of the Redeemer will give way for life of contentment and health.

Brotherhood, equal sharing must be fostered. The divine aspect of His coming must be emphasised. Broken relationships must be mended. Cordiality among people and a spirit of self-contentment will give long life of health and peace. but before all else, Christians must know their divine call towards the life of peace and amity. Bishops, priests, pastors, religious must do justice to the less privileged. Married couples must know they are called for upholding the humanity for which Jesus was born as human person. Jesus Christ did not come to establish His divinity here on earth but to lift up the wounded humanity.

One can live in peace and amity without belonging to a religion, but one cannot live so without basic understanding of humanity. Religion is man made, but human values are rooted in human birth of God on earth.

What Christmas would give you is more peace, forgiveness, acceptance of others particularly less privileged that I have mentioned above.

Christianity must be more refined and civilized. Christian culture that is founded only on Christ must be in the blood of every baptized person. There is a Herod in every one of us. He must be given a clear finish in our attitude. Let the shepherd of Bethlehem at the holy

Crib be a partner of our inner life. Let there a constant seeking in us for the new born Jesus



like that of the three Magi.

I must say, if you are attached more to your caste, language, religion, your denomination, your family status, your superstitious beliefs more than Jesus and more than love for others, then you are not a Christian. Better stay away from polluting Christianity that is supposed to be oriented towards purity of thoughts and deeds in Christ.

Try to keep serene, tranquil, content, joyful, forgiving, sharing and service minded during this Christmas.

Worship the New Born Jesus in spirit and truth more than your mere devotion and empty practices.

Fr. J. A. Nathan
Editor

ADVENT- A TIME TO DISCOVER ONESELF - André Gomes

The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners. The angel announced to Joseph: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Advent is a season of much waiting, as we Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, someone who showed us a new way to happy living.

Advent: A Season of Preparation:

Advent is a season of preparation to receive Jesus, as we commemorate His birth. Love must be a personal encounter and that can be done when we experience Jesus in our daily lives and when we find him in every area of our lives, directing our every action according to His perfect plan. Advent is a time to embark on a measure of holiness. It is not something that can be developed overnight... it is both a determination and a process.

Self Identity:

During this Advent, let us examine our lives in the wake of an honest admission of who we are. Are we selfish, egoistic, greedy, unkind, lustful, boastful, rude, dishonest, petty, hateful, revengeful, spiteful, indifferent, worldly, lazy, etc. (oh, the list could go on). Have any of these areas become habit forming? Are we a slave to any of these areas? Do we get identified with any of these areas? We need to wake up and smell the coffee! We need to identify who we are, praise God for the good and resolve with God's grace to permanently put away the bad.

Advent is the perfect time to 'meaningfully' invite the Saviour right into our hearts, into our lives and let Him have control. It's that babe in the cradle at Bethlehem, that later bore the weight of our sin and shame on the cross. So we can never experience salvation if we do not prepare at Advent.

Advent sets the stage for Christmas:

A good Advent sets the stage for a joyful Christmas. And I mean, joyful, not sentimental and certainly not just commemorative. Christmas today seems to be reduced to a sentimental affair. But it is much more. It's the birth of our 'Saviour', Christ the Lord! It's this very crib that leads to the cross of salvation

The preparation at Advent is one of self-discovery...one where we discover who we are in relation to our saviour. We realise our failings and shortcomings and in an honest admission of them decide to set ourselves an agenda of repair and restoration. It's good to take a paper and pen and write down our failings, to identify our weaknesses and set ourselves a task plan. It's more like a PERT (Program Evaluation and Review Technique) analysis. To do so, we must embark upon a planned exercise.

1. At the start, spend some time in prayer.
2. Take a Bible passage and read it – the Infancy narratives might be a good way to start this season and meditate on that passage.
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts.
4. Start with all the things you believe are wrong. Follow up with the things you feel you could have done to reach out to others, but failed to do.
5. Take each of the sin area written down and find out how this has caused hurt to your own self or to someone else.
6. Make your own mental commitment never to engage in those sin areas and set yourselves a plan as to how you would overcome those sinful 'hurdles' areas in future.
7. Make a good confession and ensure that your own resolution never to allow that sin area take over your life meets with the sincerity of the penance given by the priest. Remove all guilt feelings of the sin that might weigh you down in future too.

Let's live out this season of Advent in the true light of our faith, realising that it is not just sufficient to prepare our hearts to receive Jesus at Christmas BUT A TIME TO DISCOVER ONESELF

Christmas A Feature

Christmas or **Christmas Day** is a holiday generally observed on December 25 to commemorate the birth of Jesus, the central figure of Christianity. The exact birthday of Jesus is not known, and historians place his year of birth sometime between 7 BC and 2 BC. Narratives of his birth are included in two of the Canonical gospels in the New Testament of the Bible.

In the early 18th century, scholars began proposing alternative explanations. Isaac Newton argued that the date of Christmas was selected to correspond with the winter solstice, which the Romans called *bruma* and celebrated on December 25. In 1743, German

Protestant Paul Ernst Jablonski argued Christmas was placed on December 25 to correspond with the Roman solar holiday *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* and was therefore a "paganization" that debased the true church. In 1889, Louis Duchesne suggested that the date of Christmas was calculated as nine months after Annunciation, the traditional date of the conception of Jesus.

However, today, whether or not the birth date of Jesus is on December 25 is not considered to be an important issue in mainstream Christian denominations rather, celebrating the coming of God into the world in the form of man to atone for the sins of humanity is considered to be the primary meaning of Christmas.

Date of celebration

For centuries, Christian writers accepted that Christmas was the actual date on which Jesus was born. John Chrysostom preached a sermon in Antioch c. 386 which established the date of Christmas as December 25 on the Julian calendar since the conception of Jesus (Luke 1:26) had been announced during the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist (Luke 1:10-13) as dated from the duties Zacharias performed on the Day of Atonement during the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar Ethanim or Tishri (Lev. 16:29, 1 Kings 8:2) which falls in September-October

Etymology

The word *Christmas* originated as a compound meaning "Christ's Mass". It is derived from the Middle English *Christemasse* and Old English *Cristes mæsse*, a phrase first recorded in 1038. "Cristes" is from Greek Χριστός *Christos* and "mæsse" is from Latin *missa* (the holy mass).

Celebration

Christmas Day is celebrated as a major festival and public holiday in countries around the world, including many whose populations are mostly non-Christian.

Notable countries in which Christmas is not a formal public holiday include People's Republic of China, (excepting Hong Kong and Macao), Japan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Thailand, Nepal, Iran, Turkey and North Korea. Christmas celebrations around the world can vary markedly in form, reflecting differing cultural and national traditions.



The Nativity by Charles-François Poerson, 1667.

Commemorating Jesus' birth

According to popular tradition, the birth took place in a stable, surrounded by farm animals, though neither the stable nor the animals are specifically mentioned in the Biblical accounts. However, a manger is mentioned in Luke 2:7, where it states, "She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Early iconographic representations of the nativity placed the animals and manger within a cave (located, according to tradition, under the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem). Shepherds from the fields surrounding Bethlehem were told of the birth by an angel, and were the first to see the child.

The Gospel of Matthew also describes a visit by several Magi, or astrologers, who bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Jesus. The visitors were said to be following a mysterious star, commonly known as the Star of Bethlehem, believing it to announce the birth of a king of the Jews. The commemoration of this visit, the Feast of Epiphany celebrated on January 6, is the formal end of the Christmas season in some churches.



(Adoration of the Shepherds) (c. 1500–10), by Italian painter Giorgio da Castelfranco

Decorations

. From pre-Christian times, people in the Roman Empire brought branches from evergreen plants indoors in the winter. Decorating with greenery was also part of Jewish tradition : "Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. " (Leviticus 23:40)

Nativity scenes are known from 10th-century Rome. They were popularised by Saint Francis of Assisi from 1223, quickly spreading across Europe. Different types of decorations developed across the Christian world, dependent on local tradition and available resources. The first commercially produced decorations appeared in Germany in the 1860s, inspired by paper chains made by children. In countries where a representation of the Nativity Scene is very popular, people are encouraged to compete and create the most original or realistic ones. Within some families, the pieces used to make the representation are considered a valuable family heirloom.

The traditional colors of Christmas are green and red. White, silver and gold are also popular. Red symbolizes the blood of Jesus, which was shed in his crucifixion, while green symbolizes eternal life, and in particular the evergreen tree, which does not lose its leaves in the winter.

Christmas Tree

The English language phrase "Christmas tree" is first recorded in 1835. The modern Christmas tree tradition is believed to have begun in Germany in the 18th century though many argue that Martin Luther began the tradition in the 16th century.

From Germany the custom was introduced to Britain, first via Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, and then more successfully by Prince Albert during the reign of Queen Victoria. By 1841 the Christmas tree had become even more widespread throughout Britain. By the 1870s, people in the United States had adopted the custom of putting up a Christmas tree.

Music and carols



The first specifically Christmas hymns that we know of appear in 4th century Rome. Latin hymns such as *Veni redemptor gentium*, written by Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, were austere statements of the theological doctrine of the Incarnation in opposition to Arianism. *Corde natus ex Parentis* (*Of the Father's love begotten*) by the Spanish poet Prudentius (d. 413) is still sung in some churches today.

By the 13th century, in France, Germany, and particularly, Italy, under the influence of Francis of Asissi, a strong tradition of popular Christmas songs in the native language developed. Christmas carols in English first appear in a 1426 work of John Awdlay, a Shropshire chaplain, who lists twenty-five "caroles of Cristemas", probably sung by groups of wassailers, who went from house to house.

The songs we know specifically as carols were originally communal folk songs sung during celebrations such as "harvest tide" as well as Christmas. It was only later that carols began to be sung in church.

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing: The 18th century English reformer Charles Wesley wrote texts for at least three Christmas carols. The best known was originally entitled "Hark! How All the Welkin Rings", later renamed "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing".

Silent Night: In Austria in 1818 Mohr and Gruber made a major addition to the genre when they composed "Silent Night" for the St. Nicholas Church,

Completely secular Christmas seasonal songs emerged in the late 18th century. "Deck The Halls" dates from 1784, and the American, "Jingle Bells" was copyrighted in 1857.

Food: A special Christmas family meal is traditionally an important part of the holiday's celebration, and the food that is served varies greatly from country to country.

Cards: The traditional greeting reads "wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year", much like that of the first commercial Christmas card, produced by Sir Henry Cole in London in 1843. Some prefer cards with a poem, prayer or Biblical verse; while others distance themselves from religion with an all-inclusive "Season's greetings".

Stamps: A number of nations have issued commemorative stamps at Christmastime. In 1898 a Canadian stamp was issued to mark the inauguration of the Imperial Penny Postage rate. The stamp features a map of the globe and bears an inscription "XMAS 1898" at the bottom.



Saint Nicholas, considered by many to be the original Santa Claus.

The most famous and pervasive of these figures in modern celebration worldwide is Santa Claus, a mythical gift bringer, dressed in red, whose origins have diverse sources. The name Santa Claus can be traced back to the Dutch *Sinterklaas*, which means simply Saint Nicholas. Nicholas was Bishop of Myra, in modern day Turkey, during the 4th century. Among other saintly attributes, he was noted for the care of Children, generosity, and the giving of gifts. His feast on the 6th of December came to be celebrated in many countries

BANGALORE ECUMENICAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

THE KEY NEWS SERVICE: 6 DEC 2011: 'The good news of Lord Jesus Christ's birth brings joy and peace to the whole world' said Justice S.R.Nayak on Sunday December, 3, 2011.

While making his keynote address the Karnataka Human Rights Commission Chair-person Justice S.R.Nayak appreciated the effort of Christianity in restoring the human rights in the world very particularly the rights to worship and propagate the message of Jesus Christ.

This he remarked during the Annual United Christian Christmas celebration organized by the BANGALORE ZONAL UNITED CHRISTIAN FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AT CATHEDRAL SCHOOL RICHMOND ROAD, BANGALORE.



Justice S.R.Nayak honoured by the Forum Bishops

Began his speech in Kannada with few words, Justice Nayak switched over to English in the well known Cathedral School auditorium where nearly one thousand Christians from RC, CSI, Mar Thoma, Believers, Lutheran, Baptist, Malankara Syrian Orthodox, Jacobite, Assembly of God, Methodist, Federation of Christian Councils and Organization(FCCO) and Independent Churches were present.



BZUFHR Executive members seen at the end of the program

'Today the religious rights of people in Karnataka is at stake and to mention with a particular reference, Christians are victimized by some vested interests and political outfits,' said Mr.Nayak.

Later speaking to the audience, the archbishop of Bangalore Most Reverend Bernard Moras said, we should rise above our differences and we must try to establish our unity. Appreciating the organizers of this Bangalore Zonal Christian Christmas Program, the President of the Karnataka United Christian Forum for Human Rights said 'I am very glad to see more and more Christians joining the Forum and good efforts are being taken in this regard.



BZUCF honours Archbishop Bernard Moras

The Archbishop of Bangalore made it clear that unity among us will be established only on the values of Jesus Christ and he said Christmas should be celebrated everyday in our day to day life. He also lauded Fr.J.A.Nathan, Secretary of the Bangalore Zonal Christian Forum and other Executive members for the elaborate efforts taken to organize this august gathering to celebrate the birth of the Redeemer.



Mrs.Isabella Simon, Principal of the Cathedral School & Composite College greets the audience

While the Principal of the Cathedral School and Composite Pre-University College Mrs.Isabella Simon and Bishop Samuel Mathew of Believers Church made their brief speeches of Christmas greeting, one of the highlights of the event was a felicitation by the Forum to Bishop Vasanthkumar who is also the Moderator of the Karnataka Central Diocese of CSI.



Bishop Vasanthkumar speaking to the audience

Earlier in his speech to the audience the outgoing bishop of the Church of South India said unity should be achieved through good will and service. He commended the BZUCF for its united effort in fostering unity among Christians in Bangalore Zone.

The singing of Christmas carols in English (Lutheran Pavanasar Church), Kannada (St.Andrew's CSI), Malayalam (Mar Thoma Church), Tamil (Pentecostal), Telugu (KBSS) was a highlight of the event. And the dance by Believers Church, St.Peter's Church Rustambagh, Cathedral School Children as well as by the School Staff was feast to the eyes and ears.



Cathedral School staff performing a dance to the five language tune exhibiting national integration



Arrival of Santa Claus from Ireland

The last item of the Show was the arrival of Santa Claus was an outstanding with all standing and dancing with the Santa. The role of Santa Claus played by Mr.Amalanathan was a great fun and amusement and it added flavour to the show.



The Secretary of the BZUCFHR Fr.J.A.Nathan dancing with Santa Claus

The Invocation prayer by Rev.Abdul Karim, Superintendent of the AG Church, Welcome address by Rev.Samuel Rajkumar, Treasurer, BZUCFHR, Vote of thanks by Rev.M.C.Prasad, President, BZUCFHR, Scripture Reading by Mrs.Mira Bhupathi, Joint-Sec, BZUCFHR were some of the items of the whole program schedule.

The anchoring of the whole event was done by Fr.J.A.Nathan, Secretary, BZUCFHR assisted by Mr.Pericho Prabhu. The curtain came down with the entire crowd holding hands singing the unity anthem BIND US TOGETHER LORD. A fellowship snacks provided to the people gave a fillip to the culmination of the entire Christmas Show organized by the Bangalore Zonal United Christian Forum that works for unity of Christians in the Bangalore Metropolitan.

The whole program will be telecast in Janashree, a cable TV in Kannada on 25.12.2011 from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm. Readers, do not forget to watch this program.

Fr.J.A.Nathan
Secretary, BZUCFHR



Christmas is round the corner again, making melody in and around us. Beyond the external chores, there is a deeper message of Christmas. It is a pointer to not only Christian unity but also the unity of the entire human species.

The most common of carols, *O come all ye faithful*, was originally written in Latin as *Adeste Fideles* by an Englishman, John Wade, a Catholic. Another Englishman, John Reading, composed its music in the early 1700s. Later in 1841, Rev. Fredrick Oakley translated the text into English. Joy resounds when we sing *Joy to the world*, written by an English Non-Conformist Independent pastor, Isaac Watts, in 1719 based on Psalm 98. Its music was set in 1728 by a German-born English composer, George Fredrick Handel, a Lutheran/Anglican. *Away in manger*, the author of which is still unknown, was first found published in a Lutheran Sunday School Hymnal in 1885, and its music was added in 1895 by William J. Kirkpatrick. Similar is the story of most carols. Aren't these carols sung at Christmas in every Christian group irrespective of any denominational labels? Aren't all Christians one at Christmas? Yes, Christmas and its carols unite Christ's disciples.

At the birth of Jesus, the angel said "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people" (Lk 2:10). Yes, "this good news is for the whole people in every age" (Fr.Zacharias Mattam SDB). The risen Lord greeted his disciples with, "Peace be with you" (Lk 24:36). The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth among men" (Lk 2:14). Yes, PEACE (*Shalom*) is God's Christmas gift to humankind. No wonder, the international community irrespective of their personal religious persuasions, observe Christmas Day as a Day of Ceasefire.

Ecumenism is a wider concept than just the unity of Christians. Unity of the followers of Jesus is a step in the right direction towards cosmic unity, the unity of all people, indeed of all creation. During a visit to India in 1985, the former head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury said, "The ultimate goal of Christian unity is not actually the Church at all but the whole human race. Christian unity is but a sign, instrument and foretaste of the wider unity of every race and language, people and nation which is the Kingdom of God. For Christian unity to serve this wider unity, the Church must become a sign that barriers can be broken down, that conflicts can be overcome, that diversity can be contained, that community and communion are possible....In spite of the logo of the World Council of Churches, the *oikumene* is not the Ark with only the chosen few aboard. God has promised never to destroy the earth again. The *oikumene* is the whole inhabited earth." Can we be any clearer and any more explicit?

The spirit of Christmas invites and goads us to seek that wider unity of the human race. As followers of Jesus, let's strive to build bridges of human solidarity. Peace of Christmas be with you!

Rev. S. Arokiasamy

**TREASURER, KARNATAKA UNITED CHRISTIAN FORUM
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (KUCFHR)**

Coal mafia killed Sr. Valsa John'



Published Date: November 29, 2011

Baby John, brother of Sr. Valsa John, has claimed that his sister was killed by the coal mafia for whom she had become a “nuisance”.

“She had been under constant threat from Penam Coal Limited and had even told us about it when she visited us last,” he told ucanews.com.

John said that he is sad to have lost his sister but was proud of the fact that she stood steadfast for her mission.

Sr John, who was brutally hacked to death on November 15, had been working among the tribal communities in Jharkands’s coal rich region of Santhal Parganas in Pachwara for the last 20 years.

Since early 2000, Penam Coal Mine Limited, a project of Punjab state electricity board and EMTA (Eastern Minerals and Trading Agency) from West Bengal, has been operating mines in the coal reserve of Pachwara and 32 surrounding villages.

To defend their rights over their land and its resources, the Santhal adivasi community had formed the Rajmahal Pahad Bachao Andolan.

Sr Valsa along with others worked to organise the community and were in the forefront of the resistance that was building against the exploitation by the coal company.

Despite the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the local community and Panem coal in 2006, tension had been mounting in the area, especially with regard to betrayal by the company.

John said that there were many incidents where the nun had raised her voice in support of the tribals which “provoked some influential people to eliminate her”.

Source: By Bijay Kumar Minj

VATICAN NEWS

'Africae Munus' Calls for Reconciliation, Justice, Peace

COTONOU, Benin, NOV. 20, 2011 (Zenit.org).- The apostolic exhortation "Africae munus," published two years after the most recent synod on Africa, is the response to the 57 propositions offered by the synod fathers at the conclusion of their 2009 Assembly. The objective of the exhortation is to address the particular needs of the Church in Africa as determined throughout the course of the African synod.

"With this document," Benedict XVI writes, "I wish to make available the encouraging fruits proposed by the synod, and I invite all people of good will to look to Africa with faith and love, to help it become -- through Christ and through the Holy Spirit -- the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-14)."

Pope to Light World's Biggest Christmas Tree



VATICAN CITY, DEC. 6, 2011 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI on Wednesday will use a tablet computer to switch on the lights of the world's biggest Christmas tree.

The tree, located in Gubbio, Italy, is a "sign of universal peace and brotherhood among peoples," a statement from the Vatican noted.

The "tree" is made up of an arrangement of colored lights on the side of Mount Ingino. It is a tradition at the site since 1981.

The base of the image is approximately 450 meters (492 yards) wide and it extends for 750 meters (820 yards) up the hillside from the city's mediaeval walls to the basilica of St. Ubaldo. The outline of the tree is traced with 300 green lights, and 400 multicolored lights fill it in.

The tree is illuminated every year on Dec. 7, during a traditional celebration attended by representatives of the world of culture, show business and politics.

Benedict XVI will activate the lights from his apartments in the Vatican Apostolic Palace. He will touch the screen of a Sony Tablet with an Android operating system which, via the Internet, will transmit the command to switch on the electric current to the tree.

The Holy Father will be seen in Gubbio thanks to a television linkup organized by the Vatican Television Centre. The event, which will be televised both nationally and internationally, is due to begin at 5.30 p.m. and the illumination of the tree will take place at 6.30 p.m.

C for Christmas
Francis Antony

The fondest of my nostalgic memories, like most of us Christians, are of the magical Christmas seasons of childhood. The sisters of the Adoration Convent in our village had convinced us that child Jesus was coming to see children, the elders, including the parish priest, the sisters as well as our parents were only going through the motions just to keep us happy when the Baby Jesus arrived.

We 'knew' that our Church was the center of the universe. All the narrow pathways of the village used to meander through the by-lanes abutting the houses and tenements scattered in the village in random order, but all these lanes converged before the church. The pathway from the church to our house took the shape of the letter C, running beside a stream which too had the same shape. Houses were on the left side of the C, with green paddy fields on the right side. Till 1965, there was no electricity to mar the natural beauty of the village. From our house it was a magical, mystical sight to behold the church slowly emerging out of the morning fog over the green paddy fields in the western horizon with the arrival of the first rays of the golden sun in the east. Similarly the sun used to go behind the church in the evening, with golden clouds around the structure. The church would slowly turn to a dark silhouette against a glowing sky. The twilight hue would remain over the church till our evening prayers are said. Hope you would forgive my naiveté in assuming that our village church was the center of the universe.

By middle of December, we would have sprouted paddy seeds in coconut shell halves filled with mud and dried cow dung, Hundreds of these, with paddy grass of about 4 - 5 inches tall would reach the church for decorating the crib. The greatest fun was the mass production of stars out of the freshly cut split-bamboos brought from the convent land. Children helped each other to complete the stars, made colourful by starch paper gifted by the parish priest. The biggest star would adorn the crib, smaller ones used to be carried in procession by children to individual houses in full festive gaiety. By evening time the rivulet used to come alive with the reflection of numerous lamps or candles burning in these stars, the whole sight from the church down to our house reading as a huge illuminated C, and I used to murmur, C for Christmas.

Carols by Sunday school students used to go round the village singing new carols parodied in the tunes of some latest film songs, duly vetted by the parish priest. A nativity play ending with a Christmas tree was also usual.

Over the years much has changed. The community activity of making stars by children in our church is no longer in vogue. Villagers vie with each other to bring the modern stars of latest designs to keep up with the Jones. Carol songs from CDs and cassettes or televisions fill the air. I feel that the younger generation deserve to experience the joy of collective activity to make them feel the joy of Christmas and truly Christian.

Christmas in USA

Bro.Dominick Rajan John



Hello Readers of The Key

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Los Angeles, USA.

Let me first introduce myself, I am Dominick Rajan John from Los Angeles. I know Rev.Fr.J.A.Nathan a dreamer and visionary for many years. I have collaborated with him in the Radio Vatican by assisting him with radio talks, interviews and so on. Through this journal I am back again joining hands with him in the mission of the Lord.

In USA Christmas is the best time of the year. People for entertainment, business, and all other industry wait for this wonderful time of the year to broaden their pockets. Christmas sales start from September onwards.

The Santa Clause, glitters in every mall in dazzling light.

Let me shed some light on who the real Santa is. The real Santa is St. Nicholas of Myra the great wealthy handsome man. His parents left a great fortune, being the only son he doesn't know what to do with his huge booties, the women thronged for his wealth and handsome masculine man he was in totally quandary what to do with his bigger than life size wealth. He then turned to the wealthiest King of all Kings the Lords of all Lords Jesus Christ. He then became a humble priest, then later became Bishop of Myra diocese born in modern day Turkey in the year 270 A.D. His only goal to reflect the son of the most high who came to this world as humble babe of Bethlehem to make the mankind rich in eternal realities, so he helped the more and needy one. This wonderful saintly man literally healed many and even raised the dead.

The gift exchange is a must in USA whether one could be a Christian or not, everyone in America does celebrate a Christmas one way or another, you may ask me why? Even the immigrants (all ethnic backgrounds) celebrate for sake of children; gift exchange is familiar language that speaks very fluently, no barriers what so ever. The boss share gift with employees, teacher to the students, doctors to patients and vice versa etc....

On Christmas Eve the elderly Americans sit around the fire place gather all their children and grandchildren, share Christmas story with roasted chestnuts, hot chocolate milk, and eggnogs.

One beautiful thing that I observe during the time of Christmas: Every American generously donates money and food to all developing countries. This really amazes me. It is too hard to find in our country such a over whelming generosity.

Well you might argue American is a very rich and affluent nation. I agree 100% with you. How about in India? Even 10% of Indians are filthy rich but giving and sharing is not in their vocabulary.

The virginal conception of Jesus Christ the anointed Messiah is the grand finale of the work of the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:16-25. God erased the old standing order and

replaced it with new moral standard in the birth of His Son Jesus Christ. In Christ all things become new
(2Cor 5:17).

So your celebration depends on how well you and your family galvanize Jesus Christ the rock of all ages. Your deep intimate relationship is all that he anticipates in your life. Let everything evolve around Him.

May this Christmas deepen your relationship with Christ and bring true meaning, true essence, in your life Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2012 from Bro. Domnick Rajan John please follow me on YouTube Dom Rajan John, Facebook Lion Judah "C" For Christ International, LOJCFC Channel.

HEALTH COLUMN

Law of Garbage Truck...

One day I hopped in a taxi and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And I mean he was really friendly.

So I asked, 'Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!'

This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call 'The Law of the Garbage Truck.'

He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets.

The bottom line is that successful people do not let garbage trucks take over their day.

Life's too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so..... '

Love the people who treat you right. Forgive the ones who don't.'

Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it!

Christmas is a time you can clean off dust from your shoulder and help other clean up their shoulder too.

Lona

Obese man forces passenger to stand for 7 hrs



A harried US Airways passenger has complained that he was forced to stand throughout during a seven-hour non-stop flight because a morbidly obese co-passenger took up half his seat.

Arthur Berkowitz, a businessman, said his neighbour weighing over 181 kg, on US Airways Flight 901 from Anchorage to Philadelphia made it impossible to get into his seat. He vented his frustration consumer advocate Christopher Elliot's blog, saying: 'I didn't fly from Alaska to Philadelphia, I stood'.

"His size required both armseats to be raised up and allowed for his body to cover half of my seat," Berkowitz, who has been flying with US Airways for 50 years, said.

The flight from Anchorage to Philadelphia is one of the longest non-stop US domestic flights.

Berkowitz claims the flight attendants admitted their gate agent had made an error in allowing the passenger to board without having bought two seats. US Airways has since apologized for the 'regrettable' incident. The statement said: "Our intention is to offer the best travel experience possible. The details you have provided indicate that we have failed to meet our intentions".

Berkowitz said he raised the issue because he wants the airline and authorities to develop a policy on safety. DH-26.11.2011 Pg.15.

How true it said might is right. It is also conceived the concept survival of the fittest.

This theory of Darwin in action realizes in the mighty power of the haves over have-nots, the powerful over powerless, the strongest over the weakest.

Powerful, ambitious and greedy bishop, or priest or pastor over powers the weak and less privileged faithful in his diocese or parish or vicariate. Powerful politician suppresses the weak subjects on many matters and issues. Powerful and obese wealthy elites prevail upon the economically and socially poor and less privileged. Powerful and stout individuals win over the physically weak civilians in public places. Powerful and influential communities or groups buy power, positions, seats of honour and studies leaving for hardworking proletariats less or no life chances. The monetarily big individuals occupy most of the seats and places in the public commuting system by hook or crook.

In the society the second category always stand waiting for their share of prey and almost get disappointed without much given.

In the bargain, always the weak and the trodden complain or protest for their rights and shares. But what else they could do as always the law protecting bodies support the

scorners. Though the intention of the law is good, but in actual execution of the law and the force, the obese wins the success.

But Jesus Christ was born for the suppressed society. He was born for the sinners and less privileged. He was born for the outcasts, poor, prisoners, beggars, harlots, sick, socially ostracized, psychologically stressed and innocents.

Lorna

VATICAN NEWS IN TAMIL வத்திக்கான் வானொலி - செய்திகள் 19.11.11
www.vaticanradio.org

அன்னைமரியா வழியாக
இயேசுவைத் தேடுமாறு
திருத்தந்தை அழைப்பு

நவ.19,2011. தனிப்பட்டவர்கள்
மற்றும் நாடுகளின் மீட்பு
வரலாற்றில், இறை இரக்கம்,
நம் பாவங்களை
மன்னிப்பதோடு, உண்மையும்
ஒளியும் நிறைந்த பாதையில்
நம்மை வழி நடத்துகிறது.
ஏனெனில் நாம் தொலைந்து
போவதை
கடவுள் விரும்பவில்லை.
சிலவேளைகளில் இப்பாதையில்

வேதனையும் உண்டு. இறை
இரக்கத்தின் இந்தப் பண்பானது
ஒவ்வொரு கிறிஸ்தவரின்
திருமுழுக்கின் போது கடவுள்
செய்து கொண்ட
உடன்படிக்கையில் அவர்
எவ்வளவு பிரமாணிக்கமாய்
இருக்கிறார் என்பதை
வெளிப்படுத்துகின்றது. அன்னை
மரியா இறை இரக்கப்
பேருண்மையை மிக அதிகமாக
அனுபவித்தவர். அவர்
இறையழைப்பிற்குச் சொன்ன
ஆகட்டும் என்ற பதில் வழியாக,
மனித சமுதாயத்தில்

இறையன்பு வெளிப்படுத்தப்பட
 அவர் உதவியிருக்கிறார்.
 இவ்வன்னை, தனது எளிமை
 மற்றும் தாய்க்குரிய
 இதயத்தோடு ஒரே ஒளியும்
 உண்மையுமான தமது மகன்
 இயேசுவை நமக்குக்
 காட்டுகிறார். எனவே
 பயப்படாமல் நம்பிக்கையுடன்
 அவரின் பரிந்துரையை
 வேண்டுவோம் என்று சொல்லி
 அன்னை மரியிடம் ஆபரிக்க
 மக்களுக்காகச் செபித்தார்
 திருத்தந்தை.

4 குருக்கள், துறவியர், குருமட மாணவர்கள் மற்றும் விசுவாசிகளுக்கு திருத்தந்தை வழங்கிய உரை:

நவ.19,2011. புனிதர்கள் N[h;d; M/g;
 Mu;f; மற்றும் fhs; ஆகியோரின்
 பாதுகாவலில்
 ஒப்படைக்கப்பட்டுள்ள இந்த
 குருத்துவப் பயிற்சி இல்லத்தில்
 உங்கள் மத்தியில் இருப்பது
 எனக்குப் பெரும் மகிழ்வைத்
 தருகிறது. திருமுழுக்கின்
 வழியாக நமக்குத் தரப்பட்டுள்ள
 கிறிஸ்தவ வாழ்வும், குருத்துவ
 வாழ்வும் நம்மிடம்

எதிர்பார்ப்பதெல்லாம் அமைதி,
 நீதி மற்றும் ஒப்புரவு ஆகிய
 உயரிய பண்புகள்.
 இம்மூன்றையும் உலகில்
 நிலைநிறுத்துவது குருக்களுக்கு
 அளிக்கப்பட்டுள்ள முக்கியப்
 பொறுப்பு. ஒளிப்படிகங்கள்
 ஒளியைத் தங்களிடமே
 வைத்துக் கொள்ளாமல்,
 பிரதிபலிப்பதைப் போல்,
 குருக்களும் தங்கள் வாழ்வின்
 மேலான பண்புகளை உலகோர்
 அனைவரும் காணும் வண்ணம்
 பிரதிபலிக்க வேண்டும். இப்படி
 வாழ்வதற்கு கிறிஸ்து ஒருவரே
 உங்கள் எடுத்துக்காட்டாக இருக்க
 வேண்டும். இந்த உலகம்
 காட்டும் மற்ற
 எடுத்துக்காட்டுகள் உங்களைத்
 திசைத் திருப்பாமல்
 காத்துக்கொள்ளுங்கள்.

துறவற வாழ்வைத் தேர்ந்துள்ள
 சகோதர, சகோதரிகளே,
 நிபந்தனை ஏதுமின்றி நீங்கள்
 கிறிஸ்துவைத்
 தேர்ந்துள்ளதுபோல், அயலவர்
 அன்பிலும் நிபந்தனைகள்
 ஏதுமின்றி செயல்படுங்கள்.

உலகை விட்டு விலகி துறவு
மடத்தில் செபத்தில் ஈடுபடுவது
உங்கள் அழைப்பாக
இருந்தாலும், மக்கள் பணியில்
ஈடுபடுவது உங்கள் அழைப்பாக
இருந்தாலும், புனிதமான
வாழ்வுக்கு நீங்கள்
அழைக்கப்பட்டிருப்பதை
உணர்ந்து வாழ்வுங்கள்.

குருத்துவ பயிற்சியில்
ஈடுபட்டுள்ள மாணவர்களே,
குருத்துவ அழைப்பும் வாழ்வும்
புனிதத்திற்கு உங்களை நடத்திச்
செல்லும் வழிகள். புனிதம் என்ற
கொள்கை இல்லாமல் நீங்கள்
மேற்கொள்ளும் குருத்துவப்பணி
வெறும் சமுதாயச் சேவையாக
மட்டும் மாறும் ஆபத்து உண்டு.
உங்கள் பயிற்சி காலத்தில்
நீங்கள் சேகரிக்கும் அறிவுத்
திறன், ஆன்மீகப் பயிற்சி,
மக்கள்பணி பயிற்சிகள்
அனைத்துமே உங்களுக்கு
கட்டாயம் உதவியாக இருக்கும்.
அறுபது ஆண்டுகள் குருத்துவ
வாழ்வை முடித்தவன் என்ற
முறையில் நான் இதை
உறுதியாக உங்களுக்குச்
சொல்கிறேன்.

இங்கு கூடியிருக்கும்
விசுவாசிகளே, நீங்கள்

அனைவருமே உலகின் உப்பாக,
ஒளியாக வாழ
அழைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளீர்கள். நீதி,
அமைதி, ஒப்புரவு ஆகியவற்றை
வளர்ப்பதற்கு மீண்டும் ஒரு
முறை நீங்கள் உறுதி
கொள்ளுங்கள்.

5 ஆபரிக்க ஆயர்கள் சிறப்பு மாமன்றத்தின் அப்போஸ்தலிக்க ஏட்டை வெளியிடுகையில் திருத்தந்தை வழங்கிய உரை

நவ.19,2011. ஆபரிக்க ஆயர்களின்
சிறப்பு மாமன்றத்தின்
எண்ணங்களைத் தொகுத்து,
M/g:upf;Nf KD]; என்ற தலைப்பில்
நான் அளித்துள்ள
அப்போஸ்தலிக்க ஏட்டில்
கையோப்பமிட்டதுடன் இந்த
மாமன்றத்தின் கொண்டாட்டம்
நிறைவுக்கு வருகிறது. ஒப்புரவு,
நீதி, அமைதி ஆகிய மையக்
கருத்துக்கள் ஆபரிக்க
மாமன்றத்தில் பேசப்பட்டன,
செபிக்கப்பட்டன. இந்த
மாமன்றத்தில்
மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்ட
முயற்சிகளால் புனித
பேதுருவின் வழித்
தோன்றலுடன் ஆபரிக்கத்
தலத்திருச்சபைகளுக்கு உள்ள

ஒரு சிறப்பு உறவு
வலுப்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது.

அருளாளர் இரண்டாம் ஜான்பால்
ஆப்ரிக்க நாட்டு ஆயர்களுக்கு
முன்பு வழங்கிய 'Ecclesia in Africa'
என்ற அப்போஸ்தலிக்க ஏட்டில்,
ஆப்ரிக்கக் கண்டத்தில்
நற்செய்தி பணி தீவிரமாக
வேண்டும் என்று கூறினார்.
இந்த நற்செய்திப் பணி மனித
மேம்பாடு என்பதுடன் இணைந்து
செல்ல வேண்டும் என்பதையும்
அவர் வலியுறுத்தினார்.
தற்போது நிகழ்ந்து முடிந்த இந்த
மாமன்றத்தில் இதே

எண்ணங்களின் தொடர்ச்சி
எதிரொலித்தன.

ஒப்புரவு, நீதி, அமைதி ஆகியவை
உலகெங்கும் இன்று மிகவும்
தேவையான அம்சங்கள்
எனினும், ஆப்ரிக்கக் கண்டத்தில்
இவைகளின் தேவை இன்னும்
அதிகம் உணரப்படுகிறது. இந்த
ஆண்டில் மட்டும் ஆப்ரிக்க
நாடுகளில் நடைபெற்றுள்ள
வன்முறைகள் மற்றும் பதட்ட
நிலைகள் இத்தேவைகளை நம்
மனங்களில்
ஆழமாகப்பதிக்கின்றன

Photo page



Picture. Left: Deacon Bro.Ashok Britto SDB given a warm send off after his two years week end ministry at St.Peter's Church. Parish priest Fr.J.A.Nathan honours him while Mr.Fernando (Pres.Vincent De Paul) presents him a shawl.

Picture Right: Brothers at St.Peter's, Bros.Rajan & Binu(both – Passionists), outgoing Deacon Bro.Ashok Britto & Bro. Francis (both Salesians,SDB) & Mr.Fernando\ 000000000000



Fr.C.Arokianathan (Cameroon missionary) receives donation (Rs.17,625) from St.Peter's Church parish priest Fr.J.A.Nathan



Bangalore Zonal United Christians Christmas Show organized on 3.12.2011 @ Cathedral School, Richmond Road, Bangalore..... **Organizing Committee members seen with Believers Church Bishop Samuel Mathew(center). A part of the enjoying crowd (Right)**



Dignitaries Archbishop Bernard, Justice S.R.Nayak, Bishop Vasanthkumar, Bishop Samuel, Rev.Abdul Karim, Rev.S.Arokiasamy seen in the first row



Shivajinagar Deanery organized an in-put session for representatives on the use of the New Revised Missal on 6.12.2011

Construction in progress @ St.Peter's Church, Rustambagh, Bangalore. India



