



LOCUSTS & HONEY



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, THANE.

PVS: Family as a bond between God & Community in Service

For Private Circulation Parish Weekly Vol. 3, No. 50 09 December, 2007

St. John the Baptist



The Voice In The Wilderness

The message of John does not differ from that of Jesus Christ. In today's Gospel John is compared to the voice crying out in the wilderness: "Repent for the kingdom of God is close at hand. Prepare a way for the Lord and make his paths straight." John calls everyone to change, from the Pharisees and Sadducees, leaders of religion to the common man in the street. John calls the whole of Israel to change. If the people do not change, John says a catastrophe will destroy Israel. To repent would imply a change of heart, a change of attitude, a change of the way we live. John's life itself was a witness to his message. The people heard him and were drawn to him and were influenced by him. The gospel tells us that the crowds came to him, confessed their sins and were baptized by him. John was not satisfied with mere ritual actions. He confronted his listeners: "If you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, show with your lives your true repentance..... Any tree that fails to produce fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." He warns the Pharisees that it will avail them nothing to plead that Abraham is their father. To the Jew Abraham was unique. So unique was he in goodness and in his favour with God that his merits sufficed not only for himself but for all his descendants also. He had built a treasury of merit which not all the claims and needs of his descendants could exhaust. So the Jews believed that a Jew, simply because he was a Jew, and not for any merit of his own, was safe in the life to come. Similarly, we too sometimes tend to believe, that just because we were baptized Catholics we will be saved. Jesus challenges this belief. If we are followers of Jesus Christ our lives should bear evidence of this fact. Jesus also warns us of retribution to come which imposes on us a two-fold task: personal repentance, and preparation of the ways by which he who saves is to come.

"Jesus and John preached the same message to the same people. John, 'the voice crying in the wilderness' expressed his own sense of being unworthy to precede the Messiah. His baptism too, is only 'in water' and not 'with the Holy Spirit'. We are put off by this single minded and severe prophet, just as we are by the seemingly formidable and intolerant God of the Old Covenant. Perhaps we can forget them both, since we are children of a kingdom of love and grace? John the Baptist's message should make us see the range of our problems in the light of God and with reference to God. It should lead us away from the domain of sin into the domain of love, which is 'strong as death'-of love whose ray is like a flash of fire -the fire of Yahweh himself. This love cannot be taken lightly, John warns us. We must look to the Christ's coming - the King who is here and now and on the last day separates the chaff from the wheat." - *Glenstal Sunday Missal*

Mass Schedule:

Sunday: 6,7,8,9.15 a.m. & 5.30 , 6.30p.m

At Kopri: Every Sunday at 10.30 a.m.

Weekday: 6 & 6.45 a.m., 7.00 pm.

and at 6.30 a.m. in Holy Cross Convent

Mass in Marathi: 3rd Sunday at 7. a.m

Mass in Konkani: 4th Sunday at 7. a.m.

Mass in Hindi: 5th Sunday at 7.00 a.m.

Tamil Mass: 2nd Sunday at 11.00 am

Confessions: Saturday: 6 to 7 p.m.

Baptisms: Sunday: 10.15 a.m.

Marriages: Weekday at 5.15 p.m.

Sunday: 5.30 p.m. & 6.30 pm

Funerals: Any day: 10 to 11.45 a.m. &

4 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Sacrament of the sick: on request.

House Blessing: With prior arrangement.

Novenas: St. Anthony's: Tuesday 7.30pm

Perpetual Succour Novena:

After 7 p.m. Mass on Wednesday.

Charismatic Prayer Service [English]

On Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.

Divine Mercy Devotion: On Fridays

at 6.00 p.m. except on 1st Friday

Sunday School: after 8.00 a.m. Mass

Night Adoration: Last Saturday @ 11 pm

Office Timings: 9.00 a.m. to 12.30

5.00 p.m. to 07.00

Sunday: 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.

Parish Tel. No. 2534 8671; 2543 5411

Website: www.stjohnthebaptistthane.com

This week's announcements
December 09, 2007.

1. Sunday, 9th December, the Parish Council meeting will be held at 10.30 a.m.
2. Sunday 16th December there will be a Christmas Bazaar on the school ground from 6 to 11.30 a.m. and from 5 to 8 p.m. Those who want display home-made Christmas articles or food items are requested to give their names to Mr. Marcus Alvares latest by Friday.
3. The CWF meeting will be held on Sunday, 23rd December at 10.30 a.m.
4. The collection at Masses last Sunday, amounted to Rs.26,130 00
5. The collections from the Perpetual Succour image box amounted to Rs1,640.00
6. This week Tuesday Fathers will visit Horta Mahgiri..

This Week's Liturgical Readings

10/Mon Is 35:1-10; Ps 84:9-14; Lk 5:17-26
 11/Tue St Damasus I, Is 40:1-11; Ps 95:1-2.3 and 10ac.11-12.13; Mt 18:12-14
 12/ Wed Our Lady of Guadalupe Is 40:25-31; Ps 102:1-2.3-4.8&10; Mt 11:28-30
 13/Thu St Lucy (Mem) Is 41:13-20; Ps 144:1&9.10-11.12-13ab; Mt 11:11-15
 14/Fri St John of the Cross Is 48:17-19; Ps 1; 1-4,6; Mt 11:16-19
 15/Sat Sir 48:1-4.9-11; Ps 79:2&3.15-16.18-19; Mt 17:9.10-13
16/Sun Is 35:1-6,10; Jas5:7-10; Mt 11:2-11

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE!

We propose to bring out a special issue of Locusts & Honey at Christmas. Original articles, essays and poems of about 300-350 words will be published in the issue. Zones are welcome to present reports of their activities and progress in the issue. All written material preferably on CD should reach the parish office latest by 10th December 2007

PARISH VISITATION

This Tuesday Parish Fathers will visit Horta Mahagiri.

CHRISTMAS 2007 TENTATIVE PROGRAM

DATES	DAY	TIME	PROGRAMS
Dec. 16	Sunday	6 - 11.30am & 5 to 8 pm	Christmas Bazaar
Dec. 20 Dec. 21 Dec. 22	Thursday Friday Saturday	5 to 8 pm	Confessions
Dec. 24	Monday	07.00 p.m. 09.30 p.m. 10.00 p.m.	No Evening Mass Carol Singing & Skit MID-NIGHT MASS
Dec.25	Tuesday	06.00 a.m. 07.00 a.m. 08.00 a.m. 09.15 a.m. 09.00 a.m.	Christmas Day Mass Christmas Day Mass Christmas Day Mass Christmas Day Mass Prison Mass No Evening Masses
Dec. 26	Wednesday	04.00 p.m.	Sunday School X'mas Tree & Fancy Dress
Dec. 28	Friday	05.00 p.m.	Senior Citizens' X'mas Tree
Dec. 29	Saturday	10.00 a.m. 12.00 noon. 7.30 p.m.	Healing Mass & X'mas party for the sick & Homebound Lunch for the poor Food, games stalls & spot contest
Dec. 30	Sunday	7.30 p.m.	Food, games stalls & spot contest
Dec. 31	Monday	07.00 p.m. 09.45 p.m. 10.45 p.m.	No 7.00 p.m. Mass Holy Hour New Year Mass
Jan . 01	Tuesday	06.00 a.m. 07.00 a.m. 08.00 a.m. 09.15 a.m. 07.00 p.m. 08.00 p.m.	New Year Mass New Year Mass New Year Mass New Year Mass Evening Mass New Year 2008 Blast

N.B. There will be also crib, star and rangoli contests in addition to the above two day X'mas 2007 Fete. The Zones are to take part in all the above contests. Zonal leaders and coordinators will, please, start working on it. More information will be available with Fr. Gerry, Sports & Cultural Committee and in-charge people.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSES 2008.

SNEHA·ENCOUNTER TWO DAY Non-Residential course for ENGLISH speaking only.
 114 5 - 6 Jan. Sat-Sun. - Salvation Church Hall, Dadar.
 114 9 -10 Feb. Sat-Sun. - Salvation Church Hall, Dadar.
 114 29 - 30 Mar. Sat-Sun. - Sacred Heart School Hall, Santacruz.
 114 31 May 1 Jun. Sat-Sun. - Sacred Heart School Hall, Santacruz.

SNEHA· VIVAH TWO DAY Non-Residential course In AC Conference Hall.

114 19 - 20 Apr. Sat-Sun. Kohlnoor Hall, Prabhadevl, Dadar
 114 10 -11 May Sat-Sun. Kohlnoor Hall, Prabhadevl, Dadar
 114 14 -15 Jun. Sat-Sun. Kohinoor Hall, Prabhadevl, Dadar
For further details look up the church notice board

Vacation Bible Joy Programme

Our Parish conducted the Vacation Bible Joy Programme based on the theme "**THE EUCHARIST –MY JESUS AND I**". The children learnt a lot about the Eucharist –that it is a thanksgiving celebration, a memorial, a Passover, a mission, it is the presence of the Lord, intimacy with the Lord, table of the word, it is communication with God and others—they learnt all this and much more through lessons, art, craft, songs and skits.

The **VBJ** programme is always during Vacations where the children learn the **Bible** –true **Joy** comes only from knowing and experiencing Jesus. We promote God's Word through Song, prayer activity and learning.

The number of students registered for the programme was 67 while the number actually attended was 60 including 14 Children of the adopted families of **SVP**. On the final day, parents & well-wishers were invited, the exhibits of the children work was displayed sectionwise, and the children acted out what they learnt in song and skits. Prizes were given for every activity and 38 children received prizes for cent percent attendance.

Children were served snacks everyday. The VBJ thanks Rev. Fr. John Rumao, Parish Priest for his encouragement, support and generous snacks served to the children during program.

So far we have conducted **Eight VBJ Programmes** as follows:-

Our **Ninth VBJ Programme** will be in 2008 and the theme will be "**The Eucharist and the Family**".

Johnny & Violet Soeiro
Ministry of Words

DENTAL CARE MOBILE VAN SCHEME

For quite sometime we were planning to add one more healthcare service scheme to the services being presently made available to the sick from the poor and the marginalized in our parish vicinity at St. John's Healthcare Centre. We had approached the Health Promotion Trust for a mobile healthcare scheme. I am pleased to inform our parishioners that the following scheme for dental health will be made available to the poor and the marginalized not only from Thane but also from the neighbouring parishes in their own localities.

1. A mobile Dental Van will be made available to St. John's Healthcare Centre from 2nd January 2008.
 2. it will be fully equipped with equipment and a staff.
 3. it will be stationed in the premises of St. John the Baptist Church under the care of the church.
 4. it will move from here to other parishes on days assigned to them.
 5. it will remain open from 2.00 – 5.00 p.m. from Monday to Friday and from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on Saturday.
 6. Srs. Amala, Joan, Ms. Clara Correia and the St. John the Baptist Healthcare volunteers will coordinate the functioning of the dental van.
 7. Dental treatment will not be totally free of cost. Some minimum charges will be collected from the patients for dental material and other overheads in running the scheme. The deficit, however, will be borne by St. John the Baptist Church.
- This will be one more scheme of love & service in action to the poor and the marginalized. Parishioners are invited to extend their cooperation by offering volunteer service, by augmenting their 1% contribution to the CWF fund, by giving publicity to the scheme and directing the sick from the poorer class of people to the centre. .

Smile, Giggle, Laugh!



A small boy leading a donkey passed by an army camp. A couple of soldiers Wanted to have some fun with the lad.

"Why are you holding Your brother so tight, Sunny," asked the soldiers.

"So that he won't join the army," answered the quick thinking lad.

Two men were playing cards with heavy stakes in a pub. One of them said, "I win. I have four aces." "No," said the other, "You don't. I have three kings and a loaded gun."

"Oh Yes," said the man. "Of course you win. How come you are so lucky?"

To the sound of breaking glass, a house agent told a couple who were visiting one of the houses for sale, "You'll be happy to know that we're only a stone's throwaway from the local school."

Church statue for repairs – true report

After reading in the Times of India – Sunday, 2nd December, 2007, issue the report titled “parishioners foiled bid to take out church statues” wherein the name of St. John the Baptist Church has figured, parishioners are making inquiries as to what happened on Saturday, 1st December, 2007. Hence the sequence of events that took place in the premises of the church are noted down. The carpenters from Vasai had come early morning with their van to fix the shutters of two windows of the church on the west, which had fallen down during monsoon season.

Mr. Marcus Alvares who was there in the church at the time, was long since wanting some repairs to be done to the image of Christ which is used for the Good Friday ‘passo’ service. The hands of that image were loosen and almost severed from the shoulders. They were earlier set in place by a painter who had taken up the painting of several statues in the church premises. However the workmanship was not good and the hands had once again loosen. Mr. Marcus Alvares phoned the main carpenter at his residence, who advised him to send the image at his workshop in Vasai for repairs. He then put the image in the van with the help of Mr. Anthony, our sacristan. After my morning walk, I went to the sacristy when Mr. Marcus Alvares told me about this. I did not object to it as he has been always attending to the repairs and painting of statues meant for the ‘passo’ scenes. However, I alerted him to the possibility of misunderstanding that might arise. Already, one perpetration that took place on 19th October had brought so much shame to the parish of St. John the Baptist Church in the entire archdiocese. I was not ready for another shame to the parish community. Mr. Marcus took upon himself the responsibility, which I readily consented to, since he has been in charge of ‘passo’ kit for last several decades. I believe, the passo committee was aware of the need for repairs to the statue and that Mr. Marcus was to get it done.. This took place at about 8.30 to 9.00 a.m. or thereabout.

Then after sometime Mr. Tony Pereira came to my room questioning me about the statue kept in the van and asking me to come down. I informed him that Mr. Marcus Alvares is attending to it. I was then told by him that I would have to face criminal charge and the cops would come to take me handcuffed. I

then requested Mr. Julius Soares in the parish office to get in touch with Mr. Marcus Alvares immediately on the phone and call him to the church. As Mr. Marcus had gone to bazaar, it took some time for him to come on the scene.

Meanwhile cops were called. Mr. Tony Pereira led the cops to my room. There were Mr. Joe D’Cunha, Mr Kirk Gonsalves, Mr. Jervis Alvares, Mr. Ossie Rebello with him. There were two cops, one of them holding the handcuffs ready for use. The cop said to me, “ You are wanted at the Naupada Police Station.” I told him that I have done nothing criminal. One Mr. Marcus Alvares in-charge of the passo-kit has taken the initiative to send the statue for repairs. I then asked the cop if he had a warrant which I could show my advocate before I appear at the police station. I then requested him to take the chair. Meanwhile the bystanders were pointing fingers of accusation at me with loud charges. **At this time Mr. Anthony Alphonso walked in and requested that shouting be stopped and requested me for details. He then said that any outcome would be only after Mr. Marcus Alvares comes and explains.** The cop realized what was going on. He told them all to calm down and go with him out of the room as he left my room.

After some time Mr. Marcus Alvares came to the church and went to the place where the van was standing near the western corridor. The carpenter’s driver and men came to my room and asked me to get the statue out from the van so that they could be free to return to their workshop. Meanwhile I received a call from the police station. The police in charge told me on the phone that some people had gone there with a charge of a robbery of a statue in the church compound and that I should come to the police station. I informed the police there was nothing of the kind, that Mr. Marcus Alvares, a parishioner in-charge of the ‘passo’ statues had put the statue in the carpenter’s van for repairs.

After a couple of minutes Mr. Marcus Alvares came to tell me that the driver and he were wanted at the police station for a statement. I requested him and the driver to go and give true statement to the police. I was then reported that the police recorded the statement of Mr. Marcus Alvares, the statue was kept back in its place and the carpenters went away.

I feel sorry for Mr. Marcus Alvares, who has been sincerely working for the parish church, without any reward or return thereof. Like the deacons in the early church, he has been helping the parish team in the Eucharistic ministry, Catechism, Kopri Chapel, 'passo' services, ushers' committee and other activities. We need more people of his genre in the service of the church. On behalf of the parish community and the parish team I express my regrets to him and to his people. May God bless them all!

--Parish Priest.

The Season of Advent

The season of advent has just begun,
Coming closer to the Lord must be our main concern.

All these days we wasted precious time sheltering
satan,
Living unholy lives hurting the Lord often.

This is the season for us to repent,
If we sincerely wish to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Repentance is the hardest command for man to obey,
For he is stubborn to ever admit that he has been wrong in any way.

Let us keep calm and think about our wrong doing,
Considering the goodness and patience of ABBA which He has been continuously showing.

The godly sorrow we feel will make us change our minds and hearts,
We will regret for having behaved and lived with evil in the past.

This is what is termed as true repentance,
The Lord will be pleased to get back His lost children.

A word of caution to those, many or few who refuse to repent,
Be aware! You will lose your share of eternal life with the Lord in heaven.

So come, let us all repent for our sins,
We ought to obey God for one day Lord Jesus will be revealed.

Malcolm Nobre

The Good Shepherd Sisters are organizing X'MAS ROMANCE for all eligibles with a view to marriage. (Spinsters & Bachelors, 30 years of age and above.)

The Get-Together will be held on Sunday, 30th December, 2007 at Good Shepherd Convent, Four Bungalows, Andheri (West), Mumbai - 400053.
Contact Nos. 2637 2422 / 2637 1863

• A one day Marriage preparation course in Marathi.

Day & Date :

Sun. 6th January, Sun. 3rd February,
Sun. 2nd March, Sun. 6th April, Sun. 4th May,
Sun. 15th June 2008.

• Time : 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

• Venue : Muktisagar Prabodhan Kendra Hall,
Uttan. Bhayandar (W)

kindly contact Fr. Hilary Fernandes, Director,
MSPK. Ph. 2845 1547 / 2845 0121.

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR DECEMBER 2007

1. A hymn I. Sing an appropriate hymn 2. A brief period of silence
3. Read the Gospel text Matthew 1: 18-25 , 4. Read the following input slowly and clearly:

The New-born Babe disturbingly challenges every human being: "Can you make room for Me in your life? Today I must stay at your house!"

The numerous ambitious, engrossed in personal projects, reply: "Hold me excused! I have bought a farm, married a wife ... " As they desperately search for yet another self-directed project promising perfect fulfillment, and Jesus dejectedly retreats. Nevertheless, "He comes, he comes, he ever comes!"

The marginalized few like the Virgin Mary hurry down their sycamores with a generous 'fiat'. They too are furiously busy _ overhauling their lives: 'half my property to the poor, four times to those cheated.' They search diligently for the Elizabeths in their lives or with the contemplative Mary, silently listen to their new-found Master - supremely free from within, they have given him all that they had to live on! They joyously celebrate life with a never-ending song, making the Zechariahs around them burst into songs of God's praise. Theirs is the priceless Treasure that none can take away!

The rest aimlessly meander to and fro: "Surely, it is good to make music to the Lord - but not without first saying goodbye to friends, burying aged parents or witnessing signs and wonders." They face endless barren, wasted years - sad, harried like shepherdless sheep. Someday, however, the compassionate Christ will encounter them on their way to burial with a stirring "Young man, arise!"

5. Spend a few moments in silent reflection
6. Questions for discussion: The New-born Babe disturbingly challenges every human being: "Can you make room for Me in your life? Today I must stay at your house!"

Your response this Christmas?

7. Share your thoughts in groups , 8. Intercessions , 9. Concluding prayer 10. Concluding Hymn

Appeal

Missionaries of Love, Hope and Will, at Thane is a registered trust under Bombay Public Trust, 1950.

We have started a Day care centre by name Snehalaya, where we are into Skill Training and Personality Development for the Mentally Challenged persons who are above 18 years of age. We are also registered and are associate members of Parivaar - National Federation of Parents' Association (For persons with Mental Retardation, Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities).

We have plans to grow further, hence we are now looking for a bigger and a permanent place with attached toilet and bath and also that this should be on the ground floor. Donations made to us are exempted under 80G of the Income Tax Act. Please send your contributions in the form of cheques/drafts payable in Mumbai to – "Missionaries of Love, Hope and Will, at Thane" C/o. Mrs. Olivia D'Souza 22/5A, Pareira Nagar CHSL, Khopat, Thane 400601. Contact : 09869547241 Land line: (022) 25428789 (After 8 pm) We would be very happy to answer your queries and questions, or just simply hear from you. You can send your messages, queries or suggestions at : olivia.dsouza@rediffmail.com