



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. 52 23 December, 2007

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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**PEACE, HOPE AND JOY
TO OUR PARISHIONERS
FROM PARISH TEAM**



4th Sunday of Advent – CHRISTMAS 2007 - 23 December, 07.

Official CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

This Christmas we hear once again the angel's message of peace to the shepherds. We experience anew the atmosphere of that holy night at Bethlehem, when the Son of God became man, was born in a lowly stable and dwelt among us. On this solemn day, the angel's proclamation rings out yet again, inviting us, men and women of the third millennium, to welcome the Prince of Peace into the world.



While the chorus of angels sings "Glory to God in the heavens" our resounding response is "Peace on earth to men of goodwill" a response from our hearts and of our lives. We seek to be at peace with God, with others and with ourselves.

From the cave of Bethlehem there rises an urgent appeal to the world not to yield to mistrust, suspicion and discouragement, even though the tragic reality of terrorism feeds fears and uncertainties at our places of work, travel and neighbourhood. As people of "good will" we put our complete trust and hope in the Lord, that He will never abandon us and our families, which is what the Holy Father assures us in his new Encyclical 'Spe Salvi.'

The Christmas message is an urgent call to people of all faiths to outlaw every form of violence, intolerance, exploitation and discrimination and to extinguish the ominous smoldering of conflicts which, with the joint efforts of all men and women of goodwill, can be achieved. Conflicts result from selfishness that seeks personal benefit without regard for the welfare of others. This Christmas we consider how best each of us can extinguish selfishness and foster peace in the world.

Although negotiations and adjustment are essential to peace, it is even more important for leaders of nations and communities to undergo a conversion of heart and to learn to trust each other. They should seek to create peace in their hearts, in their homes and in their nations.

We commemorate our Saviour's birth by being generous and bringing hope and comfort to the poor, the sick and the lonely to those who are needy in any way. Christmas is a time to be benevolent. a time to foster peace.: I appeal to all men and women of goodwill to make small "gestures of peace" in their families, at work, in their

communities thus creating a global culture of peace. Each one of us is called to be an agent of peace and reconciliation.

I end with fervent prayers for God's blessings upon us. May the rich flow of our praises to God's glory and the Christmas blessings of peace and goodwill remain with us all our lives.

, Shalom! I wish each one a peace-filled and a joy-filled Christmas .

.+ Oswald Cardinal Gracias
Archbishop of Bombay
December 8,2007

Pastor's Christmas Message



"Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will' this angelic song once again vibrates into our ears bringing joy, tranquility and peace to our hearts as we celebrate the nativity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The message of the angels is for all believers of all times. Jesus' coming in human flesh was crucial to us to pattern our lives on the blueprint God has for each one of us. He comes as the Way, the Truth and the Life that presents to God utmost glory in his obedience and brings lasting peace to men of good will through forgiveness and reconciliation with God and with one another.

The message of the angels therefore is in a way addressed to us parishioners of Thane in our times when we need to understand what really brings glory to God and builds up relationship of cordiality and mutual trust. While perceptions may differ from person to person, our action for common good that will benefit maximum people certainly gives greater glory to God and brings peace to all like-minded people. May all of us be enlightened to see how best we can involve ourselves in common good that gives glory to God and brings peace to men of good will in the New Year 2008!

May the Baby in the Manger fill the hearts of our parishioners with the gift of love, reconciliation and peace this Christmas!

--Parish Priest.

***This week's announcements
December 23, 2007.***

1. *The CWF meeting will be held on Sunday, 23rd December at 10.30 a.m.*
2. *Sunday, 23rd Dec., the morning 7.00 o'clock Mass will be in English and not in Konkani.*
3. *Monday 24th Dec. there will be no 7.00 p.m. Mass. Christmas midnight Mass will be held at 10.00 p.m. in the quadrangle. There will be carol singing with a skit to be presented by children at 9.30 p.m.*
4. *Tuesday, 25th Dec. Christmas Day. Masses will be at 6.00, 7.00, 8.00 and at 9.15 in the morning. There will be **no Masses in the evening on Christmas Day.** No Mass at Our lady of Velankani Chapel, Kopri on Christmas Day*
5. *Wednesday, 26th Dec. at 4.00 p.m. Sunday School Children's Christmas Tree in the quadrangle.*
 1. *Friday, 28th Dec. Mass at Mental Health Institute at 3.00 p.m. A bus will leave at 2.00 p.m. from the church..*
 2. *Friday, 28th Dec. there will be Senior Citizens' Christmas Party at 5.00 p.m. in the auditorium. Those who are sixty and above are invited.*
 3. *Saturday, 29th Dec. there will be Mass for the sick and the homebound in the church followed by Christmas party at 10.00 a.m. At 12.00 noon there will be Christmas lunch for the poor in the auditorium.*
 4. *Sunday, 30th Dec. there will be Christmas Family-Day celebration for all parish families at 7.30 p.m. in the quadrangle. Entry passes/coupons are available at the Legion Stall.*
 5. *Monday, 31st Dec. there will be no 7.00 p.m. Mass. Holy Hour and Mass in the church at 9.45 p.m.*
 6. *Tuesday, 1st January – Masses at 6.00, 7.00, 8.00 and at 9.15 in the morning and at 7.00 in the evening. In the evening New Year's Blast in the quadrangle organized by the Youth*
 7. *Group. Entry passes are available with the youth members outside after Mass.*
 8. *Sunday, January 6 – house-workers' party. To register your house-worker please contact your zonal leader.*
 9. *The collection at Masses last Sunday, amounted to Rs.28,104 00*
 10. *The collections from the Perpetual Succour image box amounted to Rs2866.00*

This Week's Liturgical Readings

24/Mon 2 Sm7:1-5.8b-12.14a.16; Ps 88:2-3.4-5.27&29; Lk 1:67-79
 25/Tue NATIVITY OF THE LORD (501.)
 26/ Wed Stephen (F) Acts 6:8-10,7:54-59; Ps 30:3-4.6.8.16bc&17; Mt 10:17-22
 27/Thu John (F) 1 In 1:1-4; Ps 96:1-2.5-6.11-12; In 20:1&2-8
 28/Fri Holy Innocents (F) 1 In 1 :5-2:2, Ps 123:2-5,7-8; Mt 2: 13-18
 29/Sat Thomas Becket 1 In 2:3-11; Ps 95:1-2a.2b-3.5b-6; Lk 2:22-35
 30/Sun Holy Family – Sir 3:3-17; Col3:12-21; Mt2: 13-23

House-workers Party 6th January 2008

In the spirit of the festive season, here's your chance to show your appreciation to your house-workers by registering them for a special get-together on 6th January at 4 pm. We assure you your household help will have a great time playing games and winning prizes, not to mention the useful take-aways they receive, thanks to the generosity of our Parish Priest and the team. This is the 4th successful Annual House-Workers Get-together organized by the Women's Cell of our parish on behalf of the parish community. To register your house-worker, please contact your zonal leader or call Erica @ 9821241807 or Amber @ 9821334422 before 27th December, 2007.

Smile, Giggle, Laugh!



The snow had covered the porch, so I rang the garage to help me fix snow-tyres.

"Sorry but you'll have to wait."

"How about tomorrow?"

"I am busy tomorrow."

"When do you think you can make it?" "When it does not snow."

Counsel was cross-examining a witness-

"You say you saw the shots fired. How far were you?"

"When the first shot was fired I was ten feet away. " "Now tell the Court. how far you were when the second shot was fired."

"About half a mile, Sir."

Proprietor of a music store, training his new boy:

"Now if a customer comes in and wants to look at a piano, flute, bango or guitar. you know what to show him."

"Yes, Sir."

"And suppose a customer asks you for a tyre?" "I'll send for you, Sir."

**SENIOR CITIZENS'
CHRISTMAS PARTY
ON FRIDAY, 28TH DECEMBER
AT 5.00 PM.
IN THE AUDITORIUM**

N.B. Those parishioners sixty and above are invited to the senior citizens' party.

Please, give your names to the parish office by 27th December, 2007.

NEW YEAR'S BLAST 2008.

The Youth Group will be organizing a New Year's Dance on 1st January, 2008.

Venue: St. John the Baptist Quadrangle

Time: 7.30 p.m. onwards

Entry Passes Rs. 50/- per child below 10 yrs
Rs. 75/- per adult.

Passes are available at the Youth Stall outside after every Mass on Saturday/Sunday, Dec.

15/16, 22/23 & 29/30

On Christmas Day

Little baby Jesus is born
in a manger,
In a simple town of
Bethlehem with Mary to
be His mother.



The dark clouds of sin will now begin to disappear,
The radiant light of Jesus will make our lives bright
for sure.

ABBA, our loving Father has sent His only Son for
our rescue,
We will be liberated from Satan's evil spell and our
lives will be renewed.

The burden of our sin will be borne by our Lord,
It is this unconditional love which our heavenly
Father has for us all.

It is indeed painful for a Father to sacrifice His only begotten
Son on the cross,
"You are my most loved people" is what He keeps
reminding us on and off.

God's love for man is just crazy,
To humanity it has and will always remain a great
mystery.

So let us as a family with open hearts welcome our
Redeemer,
Other earthly celebrations can wait, but we cannot
keep Him waiting who to us is so dear.

On this day of Christmas, wishing one and all
Merry Christmas,
May the peace of Christ dwell in our hearts in the
coming years.



Malcolm Nobre

CHRISTMAS FAMILY-DAY CELEBRATION

**SUNDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, 2007
FROM 7.30 P.M. onward**

VENUE: ST. JOHN'S QUADRANGLE

*an evening of fun-filled excitement for
families –
games & food stalls, spot contests, multi-
talented competitions, music & dancing and
much more.*

ENTRY PASSES @ Rs. 5/- and DINNER
COUPONS @ Rs. 20/- will be available at
Legion Stall after Mass on Saturday & Sunday
Dec. 15/16 & 22/23

To The Elderly in the Parish

Gone are those days when an active
role in life you were asked to play,
Today you are refused to partake in
life's activities I have no words to
say.



You have been demoted from life's
high position,
Pushed aside somewhere in the corner for no
reason.

You feel dejected and lonely at home,

Your children no longer need assistance as they are on their own.

You have no support emotionally and financially,
So you ought to be very careful and live tactfully.

You are not given the required respect with no consideration for your seniority,
You are abandoned by your own children making the Lord unhappy.

Your saved valuables and property are also not spared,
There are children of such character which in your days would have been very rare.

If not your children your grandchildren are there to love you,
It is nice to see you become little children like them too.

On Christmas Day I have a word with you to share,
May you live healthy, and experience God's peace which for you will always be there.

Malcolm Nobre

**A CHRISTMAS
I'LL NEVER FORGET**

Christmas 1999
And I was determined
To make it to Divine,
For a Millennium Retreat

At Muringoor in Kerala,
So I boarded the train
Travelling alone,
No, not alone,
For with a Protestant family,
I experienced Jesus' company.
Time and again
They shared their Christmas cake,
And when they had to alight,
They felt their cake an extra weight,
And gave it all to me.

At 9.30 p.m. that Christmas Eve,
I travelled alone by rickshaw,
A one hour's journey
From Trichur to Divine.
No time to feel lonely.
For I kept feasting on the sight,
Of the most beautiful sparkling stars,
Ever seen in my life,
That brightened each house that night.

Finally I was at Divine,
And found myself rushing



To catch up with the procession,
On its way to the grounds,
For the Midnight Mass.

I made it at the end,
Right behind the elephant.

And when I saw the Congregation
Of 25,000 strong,
From different countries of the world,
I looked at my swollen feet
And wondered if I'd get a seat,

Just then I saw a chair,
Everybody crossed it,
But nobody sat on it,
Because that was the chair

Jesus had reserved for me.

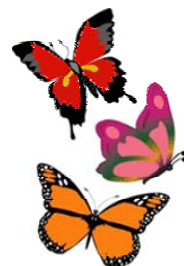
After the mass
Large chunks of cake
For everybody.
That was more than slices,
O the lavish love of Jesus!

Then I proceeded towards the crib,
What a Crib! Never seen a larger one.
You had to keep on moving
Into the town of Bethlehem
And cross many a dwelling place,
Till you finally came
To where the child was born,

Lunch time was shocking,
Just sharing the poverty at the stable,
Only drumstick curry,
No use of my whelted appetite,
The sophisticated lady beside me
Murmured and complained,
Is this what they give us
For Christmas lunch?
I silenced her saying,
May be the child Jesus
Had been having this

Ever after that Christmas,
I am happy with what I get
On Christmas day
I need no chicken, fish,
Beef or pork,
Leftovers will do,
Because what Jesus gives is
OH, SO ---MUCH

Ella



A Call From The Manger

Hi! Its My birthday today!
 Do you remember Me?
 I thought you'll give Me a gift
 But in preparations you are so busy;
 That in the corner of your house,
 In the crib you left me.
 You were preparing those yummy sweets,
 And some of you decorating the Christmas tree
 And all those little children out there said-
 "Hey Santa! What you've got for me?"
 On the eve of Christmas,you went to church;
 The choir rendered their carols
 The Eucharist was celebrated,
 But many of you were thinking;
 Thinking about the party at night,
 About the gifts you all waited for.
 The Next Day (The 25th!)
 I thought at least now you would remember me;
 But you were all waiting for lunch,
 I thought you at least would say the grace
 But that chicken was so tempting;
 It reflected on your face.
 I ask nothing much,
 But just a small Prayer;
 Thanking not Me,
 But my Father up there!



--Mark Menezes
 K`villa.

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



MAN SAVES MAN

After two years of philosophy and a year of regency, I returned to the seminary to resume my studies in theology. I was exceedingly zealous to plunge into theology. The chief reason for this was that

manifold questions concerning the faith kept resonating within me. Why had the omnipotent God to take the form of a man in order to emancipate humanity from sin, could He not do this by remaining God? Was one such question that persistently challenged me? Years elapsed introspecting on this million dollar question but my search was fruitless.

Then came the year 2005. The Season of Advent was just-round-the-corner. Once again the aforementioned question kept haunting me. Christmas came and went. Eventually the Season of Christmas too came to an end. Subsequently I too forgot about the question. The winter of 2006 was biting cold. Every night, unfailingly I kept the windows of my room closed to protect me from cold. One morning I woke up to discover to my surprise a black bird (unidentifiable) that had entered my room and perched itself in a corner. Obviously it had entered through the ventilators. I could not bear this. I immediately took a sweeping broom and began to shoo it away. But obviously it kept flying from one end of the room to the other. I was exasperated. Suddenly it dawned on me that my door and windows were shut. I quickly opened them. Once again it attempted to shoo the bird away. I was deliberately directing it to the door and the windows. But to no avail. It kept hovering inside the room. I said to myself, why can't this blessed bird see the door or the windows and pass through it? I failed in all my attempts. Finally, I took the assistance of two seminarians to expel the bird.

That morning as I was meditating in the chapel, I began to ask myself, why that bird could not understand that I was trying to help it? Then it struck me that I was a human being, while that bird was not. For the bird to follow what I was doing, I had to become like the bird. I had to enter into the world of the bird. Suddenly, in a moment of inspiration, it also struck me how true is this of the mystery of Incarnation. In order to redeem humanity from sin God had to take the form of a human being. Incarnation was the best possible way that God could salvage humanity. Only man can save man. And God chose Mary to bring Him into the world, which implies that God uses a human being to save human beings from their predicament. The Incarnation also signifies God's personal love for human beings because He stripped himself of His glory to identify Himself with humanity. God in Jesus took on a human face. He is Emmanuel – God with us. Therefore, we can now encounter Him in human beings.



A very Holy Christmas and a joy-filled New Year.

Dn. Oniel Rodrigues

CELEBRATING THE GOD-EVENT

"The Word became God that you also may learn from a man how a man becomes a God," says Clement of Alexandria.



It's Christmas again and we are celebrating precisely this God-event: the event of God becoming a

man and showing us the way to become like God.

A small shoe-shine boy was busy shining shoes outside a Railway station. As he whipped his shine-cloth over his customer's shoes, a silver medal danced about on his neck. "Sonny," said the big man, "What's that hardware round your neck?" "It's a medal of Mary, the Mother of Jesus," said the boy. "But why her medal?" asked the man. "She's no different from your own mother." "That's right, Mister," answered the boy. "But there's a hell of a difference between her Son and me."



Yes, friends, there's a hell of a difference between Mary's Boy Child Jesus, and each one of us.

A beautiful verse by Lawrence Housman spells this difference and explains the entire Christmas story. This is how it goes .:

Light looked down and beheld Darkness - "Thither will I go," said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld War - "Thither will I go," said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred - "Thither will I go," said Love.

So came Light and shone

So came Peace and gave rest

So came Love and brought abundant life.



The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Hail Jesus fully God! Hail Jesus, fully Man!

Come, let's celebrate JESUS!

Sister Veronica Fernandes.
Holy Cross Convent,
Thane.



HEALTH CELL – A HALF YEARLY REPORT

St. John the Baptist Health Cell under the guidance of our parish Priest Rev. Fr. John Rumao has been very active this year. In addition to the daily activities such as the Allopathy, Homoeopathy and Naturopathy clinics during the



week, a number of activities have been conducted so far. June we had the Blood Donation drive followed by the Osteoporosis Detection and Awareness camp. This year we decided not to restrict ourselves to the parish but reach out at the Deanery level hence a series of talks on the Basics of Nature Cure through Power point presentations were held in various schools and colleges in Thane

and Mumbai, these talks are given in English, Hindi and Marathi and are well appreciated. The neighbouring parishes such as Majiwade and Wagle Estate were included too, thanks to

the very cooperative Parish Priests Rev. Fr. Andrew Mukadam, Fr. Leo and Fr. Edward. This year The Free Eye Camp was a huge success wherein 329 people were tested, 167 were given free spectacles and 5 were operated for cataract totally free of charge.

This year Ms. Clara Correia representing the Health cell is doing her IMFE course. The members of the Homoeopathy sub group attended two refresher courses at Mumbai and Goa. There was a two day Intensive Inservice training program for the health cell members on Holistic health and to increase spirituality in their mission. Four members of the health cell are attending the Holistic faith formation course being held at St. John's. There are a number of activities planned for the second half of the year. The ambitious project of the Mobile Dental Clinic will be inaugurated on 2nd January 2008. It took one and a half year for this dream to materialize wherein the aim being to give dental care to the



people of Thane at minimal cost. The mobile van called Hello Doctor will be stationed at St. John's and will move to various parishes (schedule printed in previous issue). We are indeed very grateful to Dr. Meroin D'Costa (Naman Dental Clinic- Cherai) who has volunteered to offer his services everyday of the week despite his busy schedule with no questions asked! It is heartening to note that we do have young and dynamic professionals who are so committed and service oriented.



No vision or mission is possible without the people who share the same dream; though we are just eight of us we feel the need for more people to join us in fulfilling our

vision and mission – Providing Holistic Health to the people of Thane around the triple theme of Procreation, Life and Death. It is the season of giving and receiving so if any of you reading this article would like to offer your services in any capacity – through thoughts, words or deeds please do contact the Health Cell on Wed. or Sun. from 5 to 7 PM. Wishing one and all Merry Christmas and a New Year of Good Health.



FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is not an act in time
It's an attitude of heart and mind
That should stay with us all day through
In everything we say and do.
Forgiveness is to always give
The benefit of the doubt
to those with whom you live
and encounter in your daily life
In contradiction or in strife
For the most beautiful words
Christ gave to me and you
was, "Father forgive them
for they know not what they do".



Dorothy Serpes
(Goa)



IN JUDGING OTHERS

Why should we in judgment sit
Over our neighbour's act
Don't we have our limitations?
When we do not know the facts
We can only see the surface
We can't fathom his depth of mind
The trauma that he is going through
So let's not be unkind
Why judge your brother rashly
Try instead to realize
Imagine yourself in his situation
It's then that you'll be wise
and the guilt of condemnation
Will not fall upon your head
"Judge not and thou shall not be judged"
That's what Christ has said.

Dorothy Serpes
(Goa)



TOLERANCE

The greatest of all virtues
Is tolerance for sure
It's a prelude to love
To accept and endure
To understand you brother
And walk in his shoes
Shoulder to shoulder
The way he may choose
It is no easy task
Perhaps he is not right
But tolerance will finally
Put hatred to flight
And as you rub shoulders
With him day by day
Tolerance brings love
In a wonderful way
Tolerance brings peace
And an understanding so true
Changing the world
To make it a new.



Dorothy Serpes
(Goa)

OUR LORD JESUS

Jesus Christ – unlike all other Gods
As idols on pedestal stand
Our Lord is human flesh and blood



He can touch and understand



You can feel His nearness
 You can hear Him speak
 As He whispers words of love
 So gentle kind and meek
 You can lay your head upon His
 shoulder

As did His disciple John
 You'll feel His hand upon your brow
 And all your worries gone
 You may come to Him just as you are
 In all your filthy mire
 He will put His arms around you
 For to love is His desire
 To reach out to humanity
 To embrace us one and all
 To help us when we're unsteady
 To lift us when we fall
 You may tell Him all your problems
 All that you're going through
 For He said "Until end of time
 Behold I AM WITH YOU."

Dorothy Serpes

CHRISTMAS 2007 PROGRAM

DATES	DAY	TIME	PROGRAMS
Dec. 24	Monday	07.00 p.m. 09.30 p. m. 10.00 p.m.	No Evening Mass Carol Singing & Skit <i>MID-NIGHT MASS</i>
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	Wednesd ay	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.	Healing Mass & X'mas party for the sick & Homebound Lunch for the poor
Dec. 30	Sunday	7.30 p.m.	Family X'mas Day 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

4th Sunday of Advent – CHRISTMAS 2007 - 23 December, 07.