

Catholic Life –Vol. 80, No. 12 December 2022

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EDITORIAL

Dear friends, we enter the season of advent- a season of grace, holiness and blessings on 28th November. Advent, a period of waiting or coming beckons us to focus on waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus. It is necessary for us to note that advent reminds of three-fold waiting. Firstly, that Jesus has already come in history and we remember this event week before Christmas; secondly, of his final coming at the end times when He will take all to himself and finally, of Jesus who will come in a total gesture of love i.e. God becomes man.

God gives us a different grace in each season of the liturgical year and during the season of advent God is anxious to give us a grace provided we allow him to visit us, our hearts and our homes. We recall, when Jesus was entering Jerusalem for the last time, he wept because the people of Jerusalem did not recognize the time of his visitation (Luke 19:41:42), hence, would miss out the grace of God. Let us not miss out this advent of his visitation. Let us ask ourselves in the words of John the Baptist in the desert, are we making a straight way for the visitation of God? Are we receiving the grace God is offering us this advent? Can we make a straight way for the Lord to receive his grace? Advent indeed is a time to prepare for the coming of Christ by setting things right in our lives what need to be set right; a time to renew and deepen our relationship with God; a time of patient longing, prayerful and trustful waiting for God. Christmas gift Jesus is the grace that the Father wants to give us this Advent. Nothing in this world will fill the longing in our hearts for the grace of God, only Jesus will fill our emptiness for Psalm 42:1 says,

*“Like the deer that yearns for running streams
So, my soul is yearning for you, my God”.*

This oft-used story lucidly cautions us that we should be alert, watchful and constantly attentive to the voice of the Lord during advent. Martin, the Cobbler, is Leo Tolstoy’s story about a lonely shoemaker who is promised in a dream that Christ will come to visit his shop. The next day Martin rises early, gets his shop ready, prepares a meal and waits. The only one who showed up in the morning was an old beggar who came by and asked for rest. Martin gave him a room he had prepared for his divine guest. The only one to show up in the afternoon was an old lady with a heavy load of wood. She was hungry and asks for food. He gave her the food he had prepared for his divine guest. As evening came, a lost boy wandered by. Martin took him home, afraid all the while he would miss the Christ. That night in his prayers he asks the Lord, “where were You? I waited all day for you.”

The Lord said to Martin: “Three times I came to your friendly door, three times my shadow was on your floor, I was a beggar with bruised feet, I was the woman you gave to eat, I was the homeless child on the street.” Therefore, let us Watch out! Christ may be closer than we can imagine.

Merry Christmas dear friends! Our advent preparations will have been completed on 24th December and we will be invited by our Lord to enter into the

glorious celebration of His birth! Christmas fulfils the great prophecy of Isaiah “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given” (Is 9:6) is also repeated in the psalms; Jesus “gave himself for us” (Tit 2:14), in the Gospel the angel proclaims. “for to you is born this day a savior” (Lk 2:11) The crowning of Christmas “Christ is born today! God has become one of us!” marks a definite turning point in mankind’s history. God has communicated with us in many ways in the Old Testament. The climax was God joined to us in a covenant and we were joined to God in a covenant. But we still sinned so, God raised up prophets to call us back. Through one of the prophets, Hosea, God said that Israel has been like an unfaithful wife committing adultery by going after false gods therefore, God had to make a new unbreakable covenant with us. For this covenant, God would become flesh and bones like us, and shed his blood in the person of Jesus for St. John in chapter 1:14 says “The word was made flesh, he lived among us and we saw his glory.” This is Christmas. The poet Emily Dickinson puts it poetically “God’s residence is next to mine, his furniture is love.”

The Editorial Board wishes all readers a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

– *Fr. Vincent Pinto*

Birthdays to Remember

December 9th : Rev. Fr. Lancy Lobo
 9th : Rev. Fr. Clive Mendonca
 16th : Rev. Fr. Rio D'Silva
 19th : Rev. Fr. Ronald Rodrigues
 19th : Rev. Fr. Gerald D'Souza
 19th : Rev. Fr. Ronald D'Souza
 24th : Rev. Fr. Ramesh Kujur
 28th : Rev. Fr. Augustine Falleiro
 30th : Rev. Fr. Louis D'Sa



Ordination Anniversaries

December 8th : Rev. Fr. Robert Pinto (1974)
 21st Rev. Fr. Henry D'Almeida (1965)
 Rev. Fr. Mark Pinto (1965)
 Rev. Msgr. Matthew D'Souza (1965)
 29th : Rev. Fr. Lancy Lobo (1972)



Death Anniversaries

December 8th : **Most Rev. Archbishop Ambrose Madhwa**
 11th : Rev. Fr. Xavier D'Souza
 20th : Rev. Fr. Paul Rodrigues



धर्माध्यक्ष का संदेश

ख्रीस्त में प्रिय भाइयों तथा बहनों,



दिसंबर का महीना कलीसिया के धर्मविधिक वर्ष में दो महत्वपूर्ण कालों की शुरुआत करता है। आगमन काल और क्रिसमस काल। आगमन काल क्रिसमस के लिए तैयारी का समय है। धर्मविधिक वर्ष की शुरुआत आगमन काल से होती है। इस वर्ष आगमन का पहला रविवार 27 नवंबर को है।

आगमन काल के लिए धर्मविधि के पाठ प्रभु के आगमन का मार्ग तैयार करने से संबंधित है। इसका मूल संदेश यह है कि जागते रहो और प्रार्थना करते रहो, सतर्क रहो, क्योंकि तुम न तो उसके आने का दिन और नही उस घड़ी को जानते हो। आगमन काल प्रभु के पहले आगमन के स्मरण के साथ ही संसार के अंत में महिमा के साथ प्रभु के दूसरे आगमन की अपेक्षा के समय का भी प्रतिनिधित्व करता है। कलीसिया चाहती है कि विश्वासियों में उम्मीद और आशा का व्यवहार विकसित हो और जब भी प्रभु पुनः आएँ हम उनके लिए तैयार हों। 'सावधान रहो। कहीं ऐसा न हो कि भोग-विलास, नशे और इस संसार की चिन्ताओं से तुम्हारा मन कुण्ठित हो जाये और वह दिन फन्दे की तरह अचानक तुम पर आ गिरे' क्योंकि वह दिन समस्त पृथ्वी के सभी निवासियों पर आ पड़ेगा। इसलिए जागते रहो और सब समय प्रार्थना करते रहो, जिससे तुम इन सब आने वाले संकटों से बचने और भरोसे के साथ मानव पुत्र के सामने खड़े होने योग्य बन जाओ।' (संत लूकस 21:34-36)

क्रिसमस का त्योहार प्रभु येशु के प्रथम आगमन का जश्न मनाता है, जब उन्होंने मानव रूप धारण किया और कुँवारी मरियम से जन्म लिया। इस जश्न की तैयारी के दौरान कलीसिया चाहती है कि विश्वासी लोग संत योहन बपतिस्ता के इन शब्दों पर ध्यान दें। 'प्रभु का मार्ग तैयार करो' उसके पथ सीधे कर दो। हर एक घाटी भर दी जायेगी, हर एक पहाड़ और पहाड़ी समतल की जायेगी, टेढ़े रास्ते सीधे और ऊबड़-खाबड़ रास्ते बराबर कर दिये जायेंगे और सब शरीरधारी ईश्वर के मुक्ति-विधान के दर्शन करेंगे।' (संत लूकस 3:4-6)

इसलिए स्वार्थ और लोभ की घाटियों को परोपकारिता और उदारता से भरने की जरूरत है। गर्व और अहंकार के पहाड़ों और पहाड़ियों को नम्रता से गिरा देना चाहिए। सभी कुटिल और दुष्ट व्यवहार को बदलने की जरूरत है और कठोर और सख्त तरीकों को सौम्य और विनम्र व्यवहार से बदलना होगा। दूसरे शब्दों में, हृदय का सच्चा परिवर्तन होना चाहिए।

मूलरूप से, प्रभु और साथ ही कलीसिया चाहती हैं कि हम क्रिसमस से पहले गहन आध्यात्मिक तैयारी में संलग्न हों। इसलिए इस तैयारी के लिए चार हफ्तों का यह खास समय अलग रखा गया है। यह समय हमारे लिए देह धारण के रहस्य पर चिंतन और मनन करने तथा प्रार्थना, तपस्या और अच्छे कार्यों के माध्यम से आध्यात्मिक रूप से इस आनंदमय पर्व की तैयारी करने के लिए एक प्रोत्साहन और प्रेरणा है।

संत योहन देह धारण के इस गहन रहस्य को अपने सुसमाचार की प्रस्तावना में निम्नलिखित शब्दों में व्यक्त करते हैं 'आदि में शब्द था, शब्द ईश्वर के साथ था और शब्द ईश्वर

था।....शब्द ने शरीर धारण कर हमारे बीच निवास किया।' (संत योहन 1:1-14)

यह एक गहरा रहस्य है जिसे हम क्रिसमस के दौरान मनाते हैं। यह परमेश्वर के प्रेम का रहस्य है। मनुष्य के प्रति परमेश्वर के असीम प्रेम के कारण उसने अपने इकलौते पुत्र को इस संसार में भेजा। पुत्र जो हमेशा पिता और पवित्र आत्मा के साथ अनंत काल से अस्तित्व में था, पिता के वचन और बुद्धि के द्वारा उसने मानव रूप धारण किया और पाप को छोड़कर सभी चीजों में हमारे जैसा एक इंसान बन गया। यह ईश्वर की ओर से कितना उदार कार्य है! ईश्वर मनुष्य बन जाता है। वह छोटा हो जाता है। वह बच्चा बन जाता है। वह गरीब हो जाता है। वह गुलाम बन जाता है।

संत पौलुस इस रहस्य और अथाह सत्य को फिलिप्पियों को लिखे अपने पत्र में व्यक्त करते हैं 'वह वास्तव में ईश्वर थे और उनको पूरा अधिकार था कि वह ईश्वर की बराबरी करें, फिर भी उन्होंने दास का रूप धारण कर तथा मनुष्यों के समान बनकर अपने को दीन-हीन बना लिया और उन्होंने मनुष्य का रूप धारण करने के बाद मरण तक, हाँ क्रूस पर मरण तक, आज्ञाकारी बनकर अपने को और भी दीन बना लिया। '(फिलिप्पियों 2:6-8)। परमेश्वर ने मनुष्यों की सेवा करने और उनके लिए स्वर्ग में जीवन का आनंद लेना संभव बनाने के लिए स्वयं को इस हद तक दीन बना दिया।

हमने 13 नवंबर 2022 को विश्व दरिद्र दिवस मनाया। यह हमें याद दिलाने का दिन था कि हमें गरीबी की मार के प्रति उदासीन नहीं रहना चाहिए, बल्कि हमें गरीबों तक उनकी जरूरत के लिए पहुंचना चाहिए। आगमन काल और क्रिसमस एक अद्भुत अवसर हैं जब हम गरीबों की मदद कर सकते हैं और उनके जीवन में आनंद ला सकते हैं। जब हम गरीबों की सहायता करते हैं, तो वास्तव में हम येशु मसीह की सहायता करते हैं और यदि हम उनकी सहायता करने में विफल होते हैं, तो हम स्वयं येशु की सहायता करने में असफल होते हैं, क्योंकि प्रभु स्वयं को गरीबों के रूप में देखते हैं (मत्ती 25:31-46 देखें)। आइए, प्रभु जब भी और जैसे भी आएँ हम उनसे मिलने के लिए स्वयं को आध्यात्मिक रूप से तैयार करें।

मैं आपके लिए एक फलदायक आगमन काल और एक समृद्ध क्रिसमस की कामना करता हूँ।

ईश्वर आपको आशीष दें।

प्रभु येशु ख्रीस्त में आपका

+ 

+ जेराल्ड जॉन मथायस

धर्मध्यक्ष लखनऊ

PAPAL INTENTION

General: For volunteer not-for-Profit organizations

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

SHEPHERD'S VOICE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The month of December ushers in two important seasons in the Church's Liturgical Calendar: Advent Season and Christmas Season. The former is a preparation for the latter. The Liturgical Year begins with the Advent Season. The first Sunday of Advent falls on 27th November this year.

The Liturgical Readings for the Season of Advent deal with preparing the way of the Lord who comes. The basic message is to watch and pray, be vigilant, for you do not know the day nor the hour of his coming. Since Advent recalls the Lord's First Coming as well as represents the time of expectation of the Lord's Second Coming in glory at the end of the world, the Church wants the faithful to cultivate an attitude of expectation and hope and be ready to meet the Lord whenever he comes. "Be on you guard; let not your hearts be weighed down with a life of pleasure, drunkenness and worldly cares, lest that day catch you suddenly as a trap..... But watch at all times and pray, that you may be able to escape all that is bound to happen and to stand before the Son of Man" (Lk. 21: 34-36).

In preparation for Christmas which celebrates the First Coming of Christ when he took human form and was born of the Virgin Mary, the Church wants the faithful to pay heed to the words of the Prophet John the Baptist: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight. The valleys will be filled and the mountains and hills made low. Everything crooked will be made straight and the rough paths smooth; and every mortal will see the salvation of God" (Lk. 3: 5-6).

Therefore, the valleys of selfishness and greed need to be filled with altruism and generosity. The mountains and hills of pride and arrogance must be made low with humility and meekness. All crooked and wicked ways of behaviour need to be changed and rough and tough ways must be replaced with gentle and courteous manners. In other words, there must be a true conversion of heart.

Basically, the Lord as well as the Church want us to engage in intense spiritual preparation before Christmas. Therefore, this special season of four weeks is set apart for this preparation. This season is an incentive and motivation for us to ponder and meditate on the mystery of Incarnation and through prayer, penance and good works to spiritually prepare for this joyful Feast.

St. John expresses this profound mystery of the Incarnation in the following words in the Prologue of his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God..... And the Word became flesh; he pitched his tent among us" (Jn. 1: 1-14).

This is the profound mystery that we celebrate during Christmas. It is the mystery of God's love. Because of God's infinite love for human beings He sent His only begotten Son into this world. The Son who always existed from eternity

with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Word and Wisdom of the Father, took human form and became a human being just like us in all things but sin. What a magnanimous act on the part of God! God becomes man. He becomes small. He becomes a baby. He becomes poor. He becomes a slave.

St. Paul expresses this mystery and unfathomable truth in his Letter to the Philippians: “Though being divine in nature, he did not claim equality with God but emptied himself, taking on the nature of a servant, made in human likeness, and in appearance found as a man. He humbled himself by being obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2: 6-8). This is the extent to which God humbles himself in order to serve human beings and make it possible for them to enjoy life in heaven.

We celebrated the World Day of the Poor on 13th November 2022. It was a day to remind us not to be indifferent to the scandal of poverty but to reach out to the poor in their need. Advent and Christmas are wonderful occasions when we can help the poor and bring joy in their lives. When we help the poor, in fact we help Jesus Christ and if we fail to help them, we fail to help Jesus himself, for he identifies himself with the poor (cf. Mt.25:31-46). Let us prepare ourselves spiritually to meet the Lord whenever and however he comes.

I wish you a fruitful Advent Season and a Blessed Christmas.

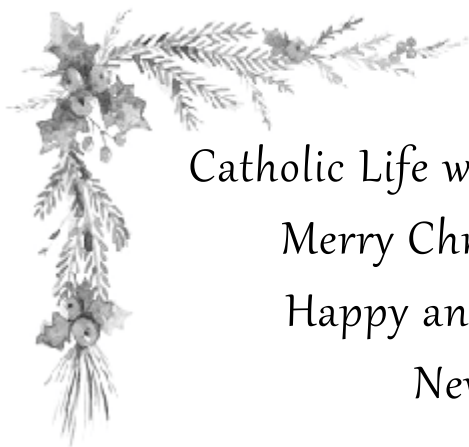
May God bless you.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



+ Gerald John Mathias

Bishop of Lucknow



Catholic Life wishes all readers a
Merry Christmas and a
Happy and Prosperous
New Year



BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS

DECEMBER 2022

2 nd	Fri	4.30	p.m.	Meeting of the Synod Core-Committee, Bishop's House, Lucknow
4 th	Sun	5.00	p.m.	Thanksgiving Mass on the occasion of the Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee of Rev. Fr. Lancy Lobo, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Lucknow
5 th	Mon	5.30	p.m.	Thanksgiving Mass on the occasion of the Golden & Silver Jubilee of MSJ Sisters, Lisieux Bhawan, Gaurabagh, Lucknow
6 th	Tue	4.30	p.m.	Diocesan Finance Committee Meeting, Bishop's House, Lucknow
7 th	Wed	9.00	a.m.	Clergy Recollection, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Lucknow
9 th	Fri	2.00	p.m.	Annual P.T.Display, Cathedral Sr. Sec. School, Lucknow
10 th	Sat	4.00	p.m.	Inter-Parish Carol Competition, Cathedral Hall, Lucknow
11 th	Sun	10.30	a.m.	Parish Feast: Annual Pilgrimage at Nitya Sahaya Mata Church, Gaurabagh, Lucknow
16 th	Fri	4.30	p.m.	Annual Concert, Fatima School, Balrampur
20 th	Tue	11.00	a.m.	Thanksgiving Mass followed by Concert on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Prabhalaya Convent School, Unchaulia
24 th	Sat	11.00	p.m.	Celebrates Christmas Midnight Mass, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Lucknow
25 th	Sun	8.30	a.m.	Celebrates Christmas Day Mass, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Lucknow
26 th	Mon	4.30	p.m.	Christmas Gathering of Special Guests, Cathedral School Campus, Lucknow
27 th	Tue	11.00	a.m.	Parish Feast: Confirmations & First Holy Communion at St. John's Church, Gola
30 th	Fri	5.30	p.m.	Parish Feast: Celebrates Holy Eucharist at Holy Family Church, Gomtinagar, Lucknow
31 st	Sat	5.00	p.m.	Thanksgiving Service, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Lucknow

प्यार का जश्न: परमेश्वर का अवर्णनीय उपहार क्रिसमस

“ईश्वर की कृपा सभी मनुष्य की मुक्ति के लिए प्रकट हो गई है।” तीतुस 2:11 संत पौलुस के ये शब्द ख्रीस्त जयंती पर्व की पावन रात्रि के महती रहस्य को प्रकट करते हैं। ईश्वर की कृपा प्रकट हो गई है। चरनी में प्रकट हुए इस बालक में ईश्वर का प्रेम मानव के बीच में दृष्टिगोचर हो गया है।

आगमन काल में हम यीशु के जन्म तक की कहानी में प्रवेश कर, यहूदी समुदाय की प्रत्याक्षा को फिर से जीवंत कर और इसायाह की भविष्यवाणी की कल्पना के साथ फिर से जुड़ कर क्रिसमस के उस आनंद में यह स्मरण करते हुए प्रवेश करते हैं कि कैसे प्रत्याक्षा की उस रात को येशु ने बेथलहम में जन्म लिया। बेतलेहम जिसका अर्थ है “रोटी का घर”। बेतलेहम की वो रोटी हमारे जीवन की रोटी बनकर हममें प्रवेश करती है। ये वही जीवन की रोटी है जो रोटी मानव के लिए क्रूस पर तोड़ी गई। जिससे हमें मुक्ति मिल सकी।

प्रभु स्वयं तुम्हें एक चिह्न देगा और वह यह है – एक कुंवारी गर्भवती है। वह एक पुत्र को प्रसव करेगी और उसका नाम एमैनुएल रखेगी। (इसायाह 7:10)

सृष्टि की शुरुआत से ही ईश्वर मनुष्य से संवाद में रहा। उन्होंने अपने आप को मनुष्य के सामने बिजली, बादलों, आग, वायु इत्यादि द्वारा प्रकट किया। वह विभिन्न नबियों द्वारा उनसे बोले। फिर भी मनुष्य ईश्वर मार्ग से भटक गया। ईश्वर मनुष्य को दोषी नहीं ठहराना चाहते थे। उन्होंने मनुष्य के साथ धैर्य रखा तथा विभिन्न माध्यमों से उनको अपने पास वापस लाने की कोशिश की। परंतु मनुष्य ने इस पर ज्यादा ध्यान नहीं दिया। अंत में ईश्वर ने अपने पुत्र को हमारे बीच में भेजने का निश्चय किया। इस तरह क्रिसमस का समारोह ईश्वर की दयालुता, उदारता का उत्सव बन गया।

संत पापा फ्रांसिस कहते हैं “क्रिसमस देहधारी प्रेम का पर्व है और हमारे लिए यीशु मसीह में पैदा हुआ है। वह अंधकार में चमकने वाली मानव जाति के प्रकाश है जो मानव अस्तित्व और पूरे इतिहास को अर्थ देता है” क्रिसमस हमें एक ओर, इतिहास के नाटक पर चिंतन करने के लिए आमंत्रित करता है जिसमें पुरुष और महिलाएं, पाप में घायल हुए, निरंतर सत्य की खोज करते हैं, दया की खोज करते हैं, छुटकारे की खोज करते हैं, और दूसरी ओर ईश्वर की भलाई, जो हमें उस सच्चाई से अवगत कराती है कि हमारा उद्धारकर्ता अपनी दोस्ती और जीवन हमारे साथ साझा करने के लिए तैयार है।

परमेश्वर का पुत्र चरनी में क्यों पैदा हुआ? एक अंधेरे गौशाला को परमेश्वर का पुत्र अपना निवास बनाता है। वह रात में सभ्य आवास के बिना, गरीबी और अस्वीकृति में पैदा होता है जबकि वह बेहतरीन महलों में सबसे महान राजाओं के रूप में पैदा होने योग्य था। वह बहिष्कृत पैदा हुआ हमें यह बताने के लिए कि प्रत्येक बहिष्कृत ईश्वर की संतान है। वह बहिष्कृत पैदा हुआ हमारी मानवीय स्थिति में उनके प्रेम की विशालता को प्रकट करने के लिए। ईश्वर ने हमारे उद्धारक को चरनी में रखा। वह चरनी हर चीज में गरीब, फिर भी प्यार से भरपूर, यह सिखाती है कि जीवन में सच्चा पोषण खुद को ईश्वर से प्यार करने और दूसरों से प्यार करने में आता है।

अतः क्रिसमस एक मौसम नहीं यह एहसास है, यह मसीह के साथ हमारी मुलाकात की

खुशी है। यह आशा की एक कथा है “स्वर्ग दूत ने कहा, डरो मत। मैं यहां एक महान आनंदमय घटना की घोषणा के लिए हूं जो दुनिया भर में सभी के लिए है। लुकास 2:10 परमेश्वर जानता है कि हम स्वतंत्र होने की लालसा रखते हैं, और इस प्रकार मसीह को हमारे बीच भेजता है। मसीह के द्वारा हमें एक बार फिर जीवन की पूर्णता में आमंत्रित किया जाता है जहां आशा और आनंद वास्तविकता हैं, सपने नहीं। इस पाप में डूब रही दुनिया के लिए यह आज भी आशा एवं आनंद का त्यौहार है। यह पिता ईश्वर के प्यार को और एक बार फिर समझने का सुअवसर है। ईश्वर के प्रेम में जो आनंद हम अनुभव करते हैं वह शाश्वत है। क्योंकि जहां ईश्वर का जन्म होता है, वह आशा का जन्म होता है और जहां आशा का जन्म होता है, व्यक्ति अपनी गरिमा पुनः प्राप्त करता है। फिर भी आज भी, बड़ी संख्या में पुरुष और महिलाएं अपनी मानवीय गरिमा से वंचित हैं और बच्चे यीशु की तरह ठंड, गरीबी और अस्वीकृति से पीड़ित हैं आज हमारे लिए यह हमारी मुक्ति की खुशखबरी है। इमैनुवेल यानि ईश्वर हमारे साथ है। याद रखें उस विनम्र क्षण में ईश्वर एक नवजात शिशु के रूप में गौशाला में जन्म लेते हैं एक कारण और केवल एक कारण के लिए कि हमें मुक्ति का अवसर प्राप्त हो। वह पापियों को ढूंढने और बचाने, टूटे मनवालों को चंगा करने, दुष्ट आत्माओं के कामों को नष्ट करने और पृथ्वी पर शांति और आनंद का अपना राज्य स्थापित करने के लिए आए जहां शत्रुता, अशांति और विभाजन का शासन है।

जहाँ आशा, प्रेम, जीवन और प्रकाश है वहाँ ईश्वर की योजना और उद्देश्य जरूर सफल होगा। क्योंकि ईश्वर प्रेम है, वह प्रेम जो जीवन को बदल देता है, इतिहास का नवीनीकरण करता है, बुराई से मुक्त करता है, दिलों को शांति और आनंद से भर देता है। इस क्रिसमस में ईश्वर की शांति आपके सपनों में राज करें। आपकी खुशियां पूरी हो और आपकी प्रार्थना को उत्तर मिले। नए साल में आपको अच्छा स्वास्थ्य सुख और समृद्धि मिले।

आपकी आंखों में सजे हो जो भी सपने,
और दिल में छुपी हो जो भी अभिलाषाएं,
ये क्रिसमस का पर्व उन्हें सच कर जाए,
आपके लिए हमारी यही शुभकामनाएं,

Sr. Kripa Umi
Brigida Morello Convent , Arjunganj

ADVENT- A SEASON OF WAITING

The Lord is coming always coming.....

The advent season reminds us to wait and be ever watchful, for our God comes to us in the ordinary circumstances of life. Patient waiting is the key to a good advent. “Blessed are all who wait for the Lord” the prophet Isaiah says. Isaiah looks forward to the day of the Lord and teaches us to wait for it with expectation. There are different kinds of waiting we have in our daily life. But in Advent we can experience another kind of waiting as it dawns upon our hearts and souls each year to teach us the art, the bliss, the peace, the pain and the wonder of waiting. It is good for us to have the rehearsal of patient waiting and anticipation of God’s ancient people to renew and deepen our faith and hope in Him whom we await in this season. Abraham had to wait patiently for the promise

of a nation birthed through him. Moses waited for 40 confusing years in the desert. Israel strained under 400 silent nervy years. The church has been waiting in expectant anticipation of the return of Christ for 2000 years. These periods of waiting have not harmed the people of God; they have nourished and sustained us. Advent is an appropriate time to reflect on the Christian call to joyful expectancy, making space for Jesus and finding hope and consolation in Him.

Advent waiting is expectant- We wait expectantly for the child Jesus to come again. It is a time to contemplate the awesome wonder of God's love for all the people with the gift of his son Jesus Christ. We should approach advent like expectant parents wait for the arrival of their child. Feelings of anxiousness, longing and awe should fill our being as the blessed day approaches. It does not matter how many advent cycles we have experienced, there is always a newness, a freshness to the possibilities of the season. But we do not know the form that the appearance will take. Will it be a gift in prayer? A moment of holding Child Jesus? An encounter with family or friends where Christ is present among us. So let us wait expectantly to receive the Lord.

Advent waiting requires making space- During advent we celebrate this truth; The word became flesh and lived among us (Jh. 1:14). There was no room at the inn for Mary, Joseph and Jesus because it was too full. The stable was poor and simple but had space for them to take shelter. Is my heart open to God? Is my life too busy with external preparations? What are the worries to let go in order to make home for Jesus to come again this Christmas? Let's open the doors of our hearts and make a room for Christ.

Advent waiting is hopeful -Hope allows us to wait patiently on the Lord. It is hope in him that is the heavens guarantee of grace. No matter how dark the darkness may seem, as we wait with great hope know that Christ is always greater, always stronger and always outshine even the deepest darkness. When we place our hope in the Lord he brings us spiritual courage and spiritual strength to move ahead. God has already given us the one who loves, redeems and Heals the world. He is the giver of hope. So, let us continue to place our hope in the Lord.

In the words of Pope Francis, "Our life becomes beautiful when we wait for a dear one or someone important. May this advent help us to transform our lives into the certainty that he whom we await loves us and will never abandon us."

Now is the time to be joyful! Joy is what carries us through all the waiting we do at advent, and it is what carries us through all the waiting we do in life. No matter how difficult the waiting may be, all have something big to look forward to in our reunification with Christ. So wait eagerly, wait intentionally, and don't let all the waiting take your joy in this season of Advent.

Sr. Merin Thomas UMI
Brigida Morello Convent, Arjunganj

NEWS CORNER

‘संत जूड का पर्व महोत्सव’



इस साल दो वर्षों के बाद संत जूड गिरजाघर में संत जूड का पर्व बड़ी धूम-धाम से मनाया गया। इस पर्व की तैयारी में 9 दिनों तक लखनऊ धर्मप्रांत के अलग-अलग गिरजाघरों के फादर लोगो ने यहां आकर नोवेना व मिस्सा बलिदान चढ़ाया। अक्टूबर 30 तारीख को श्रद्धेय फादर डोमिनिक पिंटो और उनके Praise

and Worship Group ने 9:30 से 10:30 बजे तक स्तुति, आराधना एवं चंगाई प्रार्थना किया। 10:30 बजे सेंट पीटर्स स्कूल के प्रांगण से संत जूड के पावन स्मृति चिन्ह को जुलुस के साथ संत जूड चर्च लाया गया और इसके बाद धर्मप्रांत के 40 फादरों ने लखनऊ धर्मप्रांत के विकार जनरल श्रद्धेय फादर नरेश लोबो के साथ मिलकर मिस्सा बलिदान चढ़ाया। मिस्सा के बाद सब श्रद्धालुओं ने संत जूड के पावन स्मृति चिन्ह का चुम्बन किया और प्रीतिभोज के साथ इस कार्यक्रम का समापन हुआ।

— मारिया बारलो , युवा सचिव
संत जूड चर्च मोहनलालगंज

Corpus Christi Procession



The Feast of Christ the King was celebrated on 20th November. To commemorate the feast a solemn procession was taken out in the evening commencing from St. Joseph's Cathedral Church to St. Francis' College campus. After a hiatus of two years owing to the Pandemic, it was encouraging to see a large gathering of people comprising

priests, nuns, students of various Colleges, parishioners of all the parishes of the Lucknow diocese, around 2500 in number, celebrating the feast with devotion and enthusiasm. During the course of the procession, people recited the rosary and sang hymns. Most Rev. Dr. Gerald John Mathias, addressed the faithful with a sermon at St. Francis' College grounds and spoke of Jesus Christ, though being the King of Kings, humbled himself to serve humanity. We should imbibe his qualities by living in unity and serving the poor. This was followed by the benediction of the blessed Sacrament. The people lit their candles and headed back the Church grounds in a solemn manner with our Bishop carrying the Holy Sacrament in a beautifully decorated vehicle.

A special presentation ceremony was held to facilitate two Catholic Students who performed exceedingly well by scoring a high percentage in the class XII Board examination, 2022. They are Pinju Sanjay from Study Hall School and Rochelle Jackson, student of La Martiniere Girls' College. They were presented a memento and a cash award of Rs 10,000 each by Most Rev. Dr. Gerald John Mathias who is also the President of the Catholic Schools Association of U.P. and Uttarakhand. Mrs. Lynette who was the winner of The All India Gospel Singer Competition was also awarded a Memento. The program concluded with a vote of thanks by Rev. Fr. Donald D'Souza, Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Cathedral and Chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of India.

Mrs. Christine Dacosta

Sesquicentennial Celebration of Loreto Lucknow



On 4th November 2022, Rt Rev. Bishop Gerald John Mathias, Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Lucknow, Sister Sabrina Edwards, the Province Leader of the Province of South East Asia from the IBVM and her team from Kolkata, inaugurated the Sesquicentennial Celebrations of Loreto Sisters coming to Lucknow.

The inaugural Sesquicentennial Celebration was of the four branches of the Loreto family tree in Lucknow- Loreto Convent Intermediate College, St. Agnes' Loreto Day School,

Jagriti Loreto Vidyalaya and Pushpa Vidyalaya.

Rt. Rev. Bishop Gerald John Mathias celebrated the Holy Mass, following the tradition to invoke God's blessings at the start of every important event. This was followed by the release of the much-awaited Coffee Table Book and Souvenirs.

Loreto Education and its impeccable values are like a garden in full bloom which was expressed by the four branches of the establishment in the form of an informative and historically rich Tableau. Thereafter, Bishop Mathias inaugurated Galleria Memoriae, a treasure trove of information and beautiful memories of Loreto Convent, Lucknow and the Exhibition which was a splendid display of myriad facets of the Institution clubbed with a display of creative talents of students who had retraced the 150 years long epic journey when the Sisters first arrived in Lucknow to the present time.

In celebration of the 150 years and making a credible impact on the society over the years, Loreto Lucknow showcased that journey in a week-long celebration. The enchanting glow and charming melodies from the far away land of Arabia lit up the evenings at Loreto Convent Intermediate College through the Musical Play – ‘Aladdin and the Magic Lamp’ while the all-time classic Musical Play ‘My Fair Lady’ enthralled the audience at St Agnes’ Loreto Day School.

Needless to mention that each day’s celebration is a living testimony of the lofty value system that Loreto Convent College has achieved in the long years and is known for.

Dr. Lina Godin

St. Agnes’ Loreto Day School, Lucknow 150 Years of Loreto Presence in Lucknow



“Legacy is not leaving something for people. It’s leaving something in people.” — Peter Strople

With the intent of commemorating the successful completion of a century and a half of Loreto presence in Lucknow and taking forward the legacy of holding musicals, something for which it has always been accredited, St. Agnes’ Loreto Day School staged a musical play on a remarkably iconic work of fiction, My Fair Lady, on the 6th, the 7th and the 9th of November, 2022, a three-day fiesta that witnessed the confluence of Loreto Sisters from different parts of the country, former principals and other dignitaries along with the distinguished Chief Guests Sister Anitha, member of Loreto Province Leadership Team, Dr. Bipin Puri, Vice Chancellor of King George Medical University and Sister Stephanie, member of Loreto Education Office and in charge of the education of junior school, on the three days respectively, to celebrate the sesquicentennial jubilee.

Based on the world renowned play Pygmalion, of the Irish playwright, George Bernard Show, and set in the 20th century, My Fair Lady is a play that is centered around the lives of a simple flower girl, Eliza Doolittle and a Professor of Phonetics, Henry Higgins, two people not only separated by class but also etiquettes and manners, where the latter wagers to pass off the former as a Duchess at an Embassy Ball. The concert not only aimed to provide an unparalleled opportunity to all the students to explore their skills and demonstrate their talent but also allowed the school to stand by its tradition of giving each child a chance of taking part in an event as magnificent and remarkable as this by ascertaining that everyone participated.

Subsequent to the solemn High Mass, along with tableau, that was held on the 4th of November, 2022, which was a joint endeavor of both Loreto Convent and St. Agnes' Loreto Day School, this event that culminated into a resounding success, winning applause and admiration by everyone that witnessed it, is indeed predictive of the many more laurels that shall be accomplished in the time to come.

– *Mrs. Debra Bunny*

Blessing of the New Bon Secours Convent at Uttretia.

5th November, 2022 embarked a new chapter for the mission of the sisters of Bon Secours Congregation as their new house for the convent at Uttretia was inaugurated and blessed by His Excellency, Rt. Rev. Dr. Gerald John Mathias, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lucknow. The



inaugural ceremony commenced with words of welcome by Rev. Sr. Merlin Diana FBS for all the esteemed guests present for this auspicious event. Thereafter, His Lordship Most Rev. Gerald John Mathias inaugurated the house by cutting the ceremonial ribbon. His Lordship presided over the Eucharistic Celebration and blessed the new chapel for the sisters. Rev. Sr. Saroja Gabriel FBS, the regional Superior thanked His Lordship Most Rev. Gerald John Mathias, Vicar General Rev. Fr. Denis Naresh Lobo, the Estate Manager Rev. Fr. Ronald D'Souza, other members of the building committee of the diocese, the contractor Mr. Adhikari and his team. She also expressed her sincere gratitude to Rev. Sr. Ubahari FBS, the General Counsellor, the priests and sisters of the local communities of the parish and the Bon Secours sisters of the region for their prayerful support and gracious presence.

– *Sr. Merlin Diana*

Bicentenary Birth Celebration of Mother Bernarda October 27th, 2022 Holy Cross Convent, Khairabad



“Let us praise and love the lord in suffering and joy, in consolation and desolation, for to serve God means to serve him for his own sake, even if we can do it by denying ourselves’. Mother Bernarda.

Mother Bernarda Heimgartner, The Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, was a valiant and patient cross bearer who constantly

encouraged her sisters to have the inner strength to endure all trials and place their trust in the divine providence. Yes, this valiant woman's gentle presence is experienced by her daughters in their mission of teaching, healing and social transformation. We, the Sisters of the Holy Cross Menzingen feel strengthened by her life and mission and we take it as a privilege to celebrate the Bicentenary Birth Anniversary of this noble guide. The year 2022 is significant for the Menzingen Congregation for it is the Bicentenary Birth Anniversary of our beloved Foundress. To honour this unique event, the Provincial Administration of North Indian province decided to have a year long program. This consisted of Inaugural session, reading relevant materials regarding Mother Bernarda's life and founding event by the communities, Input Sessions and Competitions.

In the inaugural function held on the 26th November 2021 in the Holy Cross Provincialate Lucknow, the entire North Indian province participated through the live telecasting of the same. The Bicentenary year was inaugurated by lighting of the Lamp by Sr. Linet, the Provincial leader and she declared the Bicentenary year open and spoke on the occasion highlighting the virtues of mother Bernarda. We highly appreciate the resource persons for their power-packed and thought provoking sessions which highlighted Mother Bernarda's virtues and values. The Provincial team animated the events of the Bicentenary celebration. Bicentenary Birth celebration committee has done a brilliant job. The animators of the communities were very enthusiastic to have various activities in their mission areas. This encouraged the sisters as well as the students, parishes and many others to learn the life of mother Bernarda.

We raise our hearts to the Almighty God in praise and thanks giving for animating the congregation through His Spirit to highlight Mother Bernarda's virtuous life through this centenary celebration. This celebration of the bicentenary Birth Anniversary of Mother Bernarda brings home to the members of the congregation, the message that charism is a gift and a call from God in a collective manner to establish God's kingdom on earth. The particular charism of our congregation is to show new ways of bringing life to the people of the era. The onus to discover the need of the time and live the Holy Cross Charism of bringing new life in discord and hopeless situations.

The concluding day of the Bicentenary Birth Celebration of our Foundress started with the Solemn Holy Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Fr. Denny CMI. Sr. Linet along with the Animators of the Communities carried the lighted candles and placed them in front of the decorated portrait of our dear Mother. A well said introduction, rhythmic music and the various prayer intentions created a meaningful and prayerful atmosphere. At 5.30 pm Sisters gathered in the Gerard Memorial Hall, Khairabad for a cultural evening. Sr. Linet welcomed the August gathering. A series of programs starting with the overview of the year long program, cultural items, video presentations of the skit on mother Bernard's life and mission, Prize distributions for the competitions conducted during the year, releasing of Souvenir, Magazine and CD (Tribute to our Founders) and the Anthem on Mother Bernarda.

The day ended with the expressions of gratitude and exchange of appreciations to one and all.

– Sr. Saumya HCM

रक्तदान शिविर



“किसी बात की चिन्ता न करें। हर जरूरत में प्रार्थना करें और विनय तथा धन्यवाद के साथ ईश्वर के सामने अपने निवेदन प्रस्तुत करें और ईश्वर की शान्ति, जो हमारी समझ से परे है, आपके हृदयों और विचारों को ईसा मसीह में सुरक्षित रखेगी।” – फिलिप्पियों 4:6-7

ईश्वर ने हमारे लिए क्रूस पर से लहू बहाया ताकी हम सुखमय, पाप मुक्त जीवन जिये एवं दूसरों की सहायता कर सकें। इसी सन्देश को ध्यान में रखते हुए लखनऊ युवा धर्म प्रांतीय ने एस.जी.पी.जी.आई (रक्त आधान विभाग) के सहयोग से ईश्वर की कृपा एवं उत्साह के साथ “रक्तदान शिविर” का आयोजन 16 अक्टूबर को सन्त जोसेफ कैथेड्रल हॉल, हजरतगंज में किया। कोरोना के कारण यह शिविर कुछ वर्ष स्थगित था लेकिन इस वर्ष प्रभु की अनुकम्पा से यह संभव हो पाया। रक्त शिविर में अन्य वर्ष के लोग एवं युवा उमंग व जोश के साथ रक्तदान करने के लिए आगे आये। कई लोगों ने रक्तदान पहली बार किया जिससे उनका उत्साह और बढ़ा। यह शिविर एक पवित्र शुरुआत है क्रिसमस के त्यौहार की जहाँ हम सबों ने किसी के जीवन के लिए अपना रक्त दिया। इस शिविर को संभव बनाने में प्रोफेसर अतुल सोनकर (प्रभाग, रक्तदान शिविर, औषधि आधान विभाग), श्री जॉनी मथायास (सन्त जॉन मैरी पल्ली, उत्तरेठिया), श्रद्धेय फादर अनिल पारकर (प्रधानाचार्य, सन्त जोसेफ कैथेड्रल, हजरतगंज), श्रद्धेय फादर राजेश डिसूजा (प्रधानाचार्य, सन्त फ्रांसिस कॉलेज, हजरतगंज) एवं श्रद्धेय फादर डोनाल्ड डिसूजा (पल्ली पुरोहित, सन्त जोसेफ कैथेड्रल) का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा।

– सचिव-हर्षिता जॉर्ज

सहसचिव-अंजलि तिकी

OBITUARY

Mrs. Stella D'silva, aged 71, beloved mother of Fr. Rio D'silva passed away on 7th November 2022 at 12.35 a.m. at St. Joseph's hospital, Gomtinagar, Lucknow due to cardiac arrest. She was ailing for some time due to health related issues. The funeral was held on 7th at 3.30 p.m. Fr. Rio officiated at the funeral mass and conducted the funeral rites. The Bishop, Priests, religious and lay faithful express their condolences to Fr. Rio and his family members. May the risen Lord grant her eternal rest and may her soul rest in peace.

BABE JESUS- THE ETERNAL HOPE & SAVIOUR

The lowly shepherds were the first to witness the Incarnate Son of God. The Magi too, though not poor, humbled themselves before the Infant King, revealing God's love for the people of every nation. All men and women are called to worship the newborn Christ, who especially identified himself with the poor who are in a certain sense *the essence and sacrament of Christ*. While we are called to love and assist them in works of charity, it is the poor who help us by pointing us to the surest path to the Kingdom of God - *that of humility*. This Christmas, by humbly recognizing the unconditional love that God revealed to us in the Word made flesh, may we experience the healing, joy and peace brought by the Child Jesus.

The Son of God was born in the poverty of a stable instead to be born as the greatest of kings in the finest of palaces. The reason to make us understand the immensity of his love for our human condition: even touching the depths of our poverty with his concrete love. The Son of God was born an outcast, in order to tell us that every outcast is a child of God. He came as each child comes into the world, weak and vulnerable so we too can learn *to accept our weaknesses with tender love*. God loves to work wonders through our poverty.

Sometimes in life we feel so much discouraged that we feel we are a mistake! God reminds us that thus it cannot be as we are his children. In our feeling of failure or inadequacy, the fear that we will never emerge from the dark tunnel of trials, God states to us to have courage as He is with us. The angel had proclaimed to the shepherds that there would be a sign for them: a baby lying in a manger.' That sign is also a reminder for us, to guide us through life. God does not rise up in grandeur, but lowers Himself into littleness. God does not seek power and might; He asks for tender love and interior littleness." We too ask Jesus for "the grace of littleness," by inviting Him into our daily lives, our families, our communities, so that we can offer one another the same love. He shows in coming to dwell among us, to serve and unite. *We shall then feel amidst our ordinary lived experience that God is doing extraordinary things*. His is a message of immense hope. The Babe Jesus signifies a light has been lit, a kindly light, reminding us that, in our littleness, we are His beloved sons and daughters, children of the divine light.

Christmas teaches us that God did not look down upon us and pass by but fully assumed our nature and our human condition, except sin. The birth of Jesus has become a universal feast and has a charm about it even among people of other faiths. For Christians, it is a decisive event, an eternal fire that God has kindled in the world, and must not be confused with ephemeral things. Hence it is important that it should not be reduced to a merely sentimental or consumerist festival, full of gifts and good wishes but poor in Christian faith. Men and women,

wounded by sin, ceaselessly search for truth, mercy and redemption. On the other, there is the goodness of God, who has come towards us to communicate to us the Truth that saves and to make us sharers in His friendship and His life, which is pure grace, not something we merit. ***Thus, God's goodness overcomes man's failures.*** We are so much in need of tenderness and human caresses in the face of so much misery ***and Christ is that spiritual balm.*** In spite of being immense and all-powerful, he made himself vulnerable. If our hearts are closed dominated by pride, deceit, self-seeking, then darkness falls within us and around us but if we love God and our brothers and sisters, we walk in His light as ***God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all. May this magic of Christmas find you among those you love sharing the twin glories of generosity and gratitude. MERRY CHRISTMAS! J***

– Rajesh Rodricks,
Infant Jesus Parish, Aashiana Colony, Lucknow

GLORIA IN EXCELCIS DEO!

*'Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains.' ...*

Ms. Viola, the Music Teacher in St. George's High School, true to her musical name, was slightly overstretched at the moment in giving the final touches to the Christmas Carols of her School Choir. The cheerful and bubbly kids were very excited to present their musical melodies at the Christmas Get Together, just a few days away. There would be a big gathering of VIPs, parents, friends and well wishers, followed by a sumptuous dinner, exchange of gifts and goodies, singing and dancing and a long Christmas vacation! That was the year-end school event, year after year, which the children eagerly looked forward to and waited for this full-filled gala time!

"Mamma, I have good news for you", little Kevin, in his early teens, exclaimed jubilantly to his mother, as he dashed to the kitchen, where his mamma was preparing the day's dinner. Her expert fingers, which prepared delicious steak with garlic dishes, drew him farther inside the kitchen. "Ok sunny, blast out the good news," she said. "I am selected for the School Choir", he announced. "Oh that's great, dear", his mamma replied with joy and delight, congratulating him with a bear hug, continuing with her kitchen chores. "Now, Mamma, please don't say no but I need a small guitar at this Christmas", Kevin cleverly placed his request for a Christmas gift. A little discussion then followed: "What do you mean a 'small guitar'? A guitar is a guitar, small or big, it's always a six stringed musical instrument", his mother clarified. And then she went on with her usual pep talk: "Well, Kev, as she fondly called him, now tell me, who the devil gave

you this idea of a buying a guitar, when we are, as you well know, facing a financial crunch”, she responded in a worried tone.

All was well with the Gomes family until the killer Covid-19 virus plagued this planet and spared almost none. Mr. Robert Gomes was a happy go lucky guy, who worked laboriously as a CEO in a multinational company and earned a decent package. But he succumbed to this terrible pandemic and left the happy family in an eternal gloom and sadness. But Life had to go on for people of good faith to rise from their tragedies and sorrow as early as possible. Recovering from this family tragedy, Ms. Viola Gomes started giving musical lessons to the High School kids, her extended family. The naughty children fondly called her with all the possible notes starting with Do, Re, Me...., one for each day of the week! For Kevin, she was not only all the musical notes but a virtuoso of all fields of his life.

“Chill mom, it’s our Music teacher, who likes to see me strumming the strings at this Christmas”, and he repeated the words of his favourite ma’am: ‘Music is the language of life. Carols are the celestial melodies of the heavenly cherubs at the holy crib. Everyone needs to give one’s best and be a melody maker at the Christmas gathering’. “Oh my angel”, his mamma pleaded with him, “your adorable Teacher doesn’t know about our financial issues and hand-to-mouth existence”. Kevin turned slightly pallid and left the room with a bang, a little annoyed. He didn’t even bother to reply to his mom’s goodnight wish.

Christmas! The Feast of the Birth of the Saviour! Many memories of stars, cakes, cribs and the omnipresent Santa! Yes, Santa! Santa is born with the singular mission to make children happy and joyful. He doesn’t like to see sad, dull or morose kids. Sure enough, he comes swaying his arms and legs towards Kevin with a beautiful guitar plucking the strings in a rhythmic Christmas melody and style. “It’s your Christmas gift, Kevin, play it for the Lord!” “Oh Father”, Kevin exclaims and recognizes his dear Principal in Santa’s costume and gives him a warm hug!

“Kev, get up, it’s time for school”, his mom yells from the kitchen. Kevin jumps out of his cosy bed and rushes for his morning ablutions, wishing his sweet dream, which he just dreamt, would come true one day. And in the School, Ms Viola continues her Carols practices in full swing: And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains....! Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!! Merry Christmas to all!

Fr. Denis D’Souza



**LET US EMBRACE THE SPIRIT OF JOY AND LET OUR JOY
BE CONTAGIOUS.**



Few years ago, a group of atheists from New York created an advertisement in Times Square, and asked the provocative question: Who needs Christ at Christmas? They answered their own question with a one-word answer -Nobody! That looks awkward to speak on the most Holy day that is named, after Christ himself.

According to their advertisement, Christmas can now be about anything you want it to be. For example, they suggested, it can simply be about family, friends, presents, parties, hotcakes and chocolate. We Christians obviously do not agree with this, but the atheists bring an important point to reflect upon. The allure of Christmas has a strange power over us, even the unbelieving and secularized.

Why does Christmas have this magnetism, even in a society that is trying to empty Christ from it? The real magic of Christmas is not presents and goodies. What lies at the very heart of Christmas, is the most stunning and significant fact: that God himself became one of us. The God who created our world, came into our world as human not just for show, but for our salvation. Pope Francis spoke exactly on the essence of Christmas. Christmas “is the encounter with Jesus,” he said.” “God has always sought out his people, led them, looked after them and promised to always be close to them,” he continued. “This is a beautiful thing. Christmas is God’s meeting with his people.” The glory of Christmas is not that it marks the birth of some great religious leader, but that it celebrates the long-anticipated coming of God himself.

Thus, the message of Christmas, to the Christians and even to non-believers, is present all around us. “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11). The encounter of Christ with his people sparks an incredible outpouring of joy, of consolation, of generosity and of hope. This joy can be quite contagious.

So how can we embrace the spirit of joy this Christmas?

Just like the above-mentioned advertisement says, the parties, the presents, the gatherings with friends and family, and yes, even the cakes and chocolate, are wonderful demonstrations of this joy that dwells in our hearts. Nobody throws a party when they are fearful of the future. We don’t give presents if there is no movement of joy and love in our hearts. These wonderful aspects of Christmas are a part of Christmas because we know that God is with us and for us; there is reason to rejoice.

We have a great responsibility to let everyone know that Christmas is about the infinite mercy of God, especially because this reality is what unleashes the deepest joy anyone could experience. Let us remember, as Pope Francis reminded us that **“Christmas is joy, religious joy, God’s joy, an inner joy of light and peace.”** “With Christ,” he writes in *“Evangelii Gaudium”* (The Joy of the Gospel), “joy is constantly born anew.” Pope Francis emphasizes the absolute centrality of joy in the life of a Christian. He urges us to listen intently to God’s voice in our hearts, and to experience the “quiet joy of his love.” We must be witnesses of such joy, and we must contemplate the great mystery of God, who came to dwell among us.

While material things can bring happiness, they cannot bring us joy. So, while exchanging gifts is a great way to show love, it’s important to remember that gifts alone cannot bring us true joy. Happiness is an emotion that comes and goes, as it is based on our changing circumstances. When life is going our way, it’s easy to feel happy, but when situations don’t go as planned, we often find ourselves unhappy, discouraged or even angry. Joy, on the other hand, is a choice. When we choose joy, we can have a joyful heart in even the most challenging of circumstances. In addition, when we find our joy in Christ, He will provide us with the strength we need to live joyfully.

Let us look at Christmas again with fresh eyes; Look at what we celebrate; let the eyes of our souls go past the presents, the trees, the Santa, the sweets and stop at the center of the manger. Remember that by keeping Christ at the center of all of your celebrations, you can experience true joy and understand the reason for the celebrations. Listen to the everlasting message of love and peace, and we will know what Christmas is all about, the God who loves us eternally even if we do not wish to receive that love. It’s a message that benefits us all.

With the shepherds, let us bow down and worship God’s goodness made flesh! Where God is born, hope is born and where hope is born, persons regain their dignity. Where God is born, peace is born; and where peace is born, there is no longer room for hatred and for war. Yet even today, great numbers of men and woman are deprived of their human dignity and, like the child Jesus, suffer cold, poverty and rejection. All of us desire peace than war. To achieve that peace, we need to embrace God who became man whose love can triumph over hate. We have to believe that our God of unconditional love can prevail in the hearts of those bound and determined to cause pain and suffering in the world. Where God is born, mercy flourishes. Let us rejoice in the great day of our salvation. As we contemplate the Crib, let us gaze on the open arms of Jesus- the merciful embrace of God. We hear the voice of the Child who whispers to us: “Peace.”

Sr. Bhajana MSJ

IMMANUEL – THE FACE OF MERCY

“Look! The virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel.” (Mt 1:23)

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph in a dream, he realized the reality of Mother Mary that she was with the child through the Holy Spirit. And she will give birth to a son who will be named “Immanuel”. It is a Hebrew word meaning “God with us”. The figure of Immanuel conjures up in the mind which signifies God’s outreaching and encounter with the humanity. Unfolding one’s brilliant mind and surmount richness as ideal helpmate to our brothers help us to stretch ourselves beyond boundaries.

In the Book of Revelation we read, “God Himself will be with His people” (Rev 21:3). ‘Immanuel’ means ‘God with us’ not ‘we with God’. Immanuel means bringing God’s embrace on earth – A sign of abundant joy – A symbol of communication and love. Immanuel is a Good News to the mankind – ‘God with us’. The word became flesh and lived among us. And the Divine became human. The son of God identified with you and me. His love goes beyond our imagination. The love is his nature. Holy manifestation was the authentic signs of God’s mercy. “Everything in Him speaks of mercy; nothing in Him is devoid of mercy” (Pope Francis, MV:8)

To be Immanuel to the world is to grow in love, to live in love, to die in love and to share this love. This love means to give one’s life freely for the well being of others. Our transaction with others must articulate God’s compassion and availability of forgiveness to the humanity. To be Immanuel means to embrace the whole human race by being in the embrace of the Almighty God. “To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all the people that I might by all means save some.” (I Cor 9:22). We perceive the visible and tangible love of God, the Holy Trinity, in the Holy manifestation – Immanuel. The merciful gaze of the Father fell on earth as the brightest ray of His beloved Son Jesus. Today the world is decorating lives with the wealth and health, not with compassion. The saintly souls and well wishers of the humanity ornamented themselves with the unique faithfulness and self emptying love. They were the true incarnations of Immanuel. There is a poem by Mark Tinijum:-

“So many lives as captives to fear, in a broken world that needs to hear,
That is God is with them and God is near, He is Immanuel.

For this world is dying we can see its decay, But we can change some one’s night today.

All it takes is for us to be bold and say, He is Immanuel.”

Manifestation of Jesus as “Immanuel” is the festival of Love and Justice. To become Immanuel means becoming hope and reassurance in a good measure to the people of good will. Whenever we come out from our comfort zones to reach out those who are in need and instill in them sense of Hope we become the true

‘Immanuel’. With Jesus we have hope which leads to the abundance of life. Once my eyes were spotted to a Christmas greeting card where it was written, “Hope is born”. As I reflected on this particular sentence and realized that, only when we grow in faith the hope takes birth in our lives. If we are patient in suffering, prudent in dangerous situations Hope will generate in us.

Throughout the scripture God calls ordinary people to become ‘Immanuel’ to the world. They had to travel out from their comfort zones. They did great things by the single act of their obedience. Moses was called to leave his job of shepherding sheep to lead the Israelites; Nehemiah was called to leave his comfortable job to become a leader to re-build the wall around Jerusalem. Esther was challenged to approach the king though it was against the law. In New Testament Mother Mary was called to become a mother in her teenage – Mother of God.

The throes of evil had engulfed the cosmos and the divine nature of God compelled Him to come down to man and to be with him- “Immanuel”. Becoming “Immanuel” is the deepest need of the world that is in the downhill of darkness and depression. In this advent season let’s all try to become ‘Immanuel’: **‘Misericordiae Vullus’ – The face of mercy.**

*Sr. Ancy SABS
Aradhana Bhavan, Cathedral*

PRINCE OF PEACE IS BORN ...

He is born in the toil and sweat
He is born in the weeping hearts
He is born in the gloomy face
He is born in the chilling winter
He is born in the scorching sun
He is born in the shattered dream
He is born in the smiling face of children

He is born in the loneliness of the aged
He is born as a friend to the orphans
He is born as an aid of the needy
He is born in the debris of human misery
He is born to those gasping for breath

He comes in the gentle whisper of the breeze
He comes in ways that are unseen and hidden
He comes in the hearts that is longing for him
He comes as a soothing balm to the wounded
Gentle touch of those tiny feet in the sin laden land
Brought salvation to human race



Sr. Beena H.C.M

आओ जश्न मनायें

“क्रिसमस एक समय या मौसम नहीं है, बल्कि मन की स्थिति है। शांति और सद्भावना को संजोना, दया से भरपूर होना, क्रिसमस की वास्तविक भावना है।” – केल्विनकूलिज

क्रिसमस साल का एक शानदार अवसर है। यह हम में से अधिकांश के लिए व्यस्त समय भी है। आईये इस सुन्दर समय पर हमारी आशा और प्रार्थना यह हो, कि हम इस सुन्दर अवसर में किसी भी प्रकार के दबावों में इतने न फंस जाएं कि हम गलत चीजों पर जोर दें और बेथलहम के पवित्र व्यक्ति के जन्म के स्मरणोत्सव की साधारण खुशियों से चूक जाएं।

बेथलहम का वह एक पवित्र व्यक्ति, जो हमें इस संसार में सभी प्रकार के शुभ दानों को प्रदान करता है। क्रिसमस का असली आनंद, हम जल्दबाजी और अधिक काम करने की हड़बड़ी में नहीं पाते। बल्कि क्रिसमस का असली आनंद हम तब पाते हैं, जब हम अपने उद्धारकर्ता को अपने जीवन का एक महत्वपूर्ण केंद्र बनाते हैं। एक गोशाले में जन्में, चरनी के पालने में, वह स्वर्ग से पृथ्वी पर मनुष्य के रूप में रहने और परमेश्वर के राज्य की स्थापना करने के लिए आए। उनके गौरवशाली सुसमाचार ने दुनिया की सोच को नया रूप दिया। वह हमारे लिए जिया, और वह हमारे लिए मरा भी। बदले में हम उसे क्या दे सकते हैं? बदले में हम उसे अपना सम्पूर्ण जीवन ही दे सकते हैं, उन्हें अपने अपने जीवन पर नियंत्रण दे सकते हैं, उन्हें अपना प्रेम, और अपने सच्चे हृदय की विनम्र आराधना ही दे सकते हैं। अंग्रेजी कवियित्री क्रिस्टीना रॉसेटी ने बहुत सुन्दर लिखा है – मैं उसे क्या दे सकता हूँ, मैं तो गरीब हूँ? अगर मैं एक चरवाहा होता तो मैं एक मेमना लाता। अगर मैं एक बुद्धिमान व्यक्ति होता तो मैं अपना हिस्सा करता, फिर भी मैं उसे क्या दे सकता हूँ? तो वह है मेरा दिल। क्रिसमस का हमारा यह उत्सव उद्धारकर्ता द्वारा सिखाए गए प्रेम और निस्वार्थता का प्रतिबिंब होना चाहिए।

इस साल का क्रिसमस आशा और क्षमा के संदेश के साथ हमारे पास आता है। प्रभु यीशु मसीह ने मानव जाति के लिए परम बलिदान के रूप में कलवारी के क्रूस पर हमारे लिए अपना जीवन बलिदान कर दिया। उन्हें इस बात से कोई जलन नहीं हुई कि लोगों ने उन्हें सूली पर चढ़ाया, उनके हाथों और पैरों को बड़े-बड़े कीलों से छेद दिया, उनकी छाती में भाला घोंप दिया उसके सिर पर कांटों का ताज रख दिया। लेकिन यीशु ने बस भगवान से कहा, “पिता, उन्हें माफ कर दो क्योंकि नहीं जानते कि वे क्या कर रहे हैं।” यही क्षमा का सच्चा संदेश है। मसीह द्वारा दिखाए गए प्रेम और क्षमा का। यीशु मसीह ने एक चरनी में जन्म लेना चुना, जो भेड़ों के पशुओं से घिरा हुआ था और बहुत नीची जगह थी। उन्होंने दुनिया द्वारा अभिनदित लोगों की तलाश नहीं की, क्रिसमस हमारे लिए सिर्फ प्यार, आनंद, शांति, धैर्य, दया, अच्छाई, विश्वास, नम्रता और सभी मानव जाति के लिए आत्म-संयम के संदेश के साथ आता है।

इस क्रिसमस को एक सार्थक क्रिसमस बनने दें। आनंदमय उत्सव के रूप में उपभोक्तावाद और भौतिकवाद गलत नहीं है, लेकिन अगर हम क्रिसमस के वास्तविक सार को समझे बिना जश्न मनाते हैं, तो क्रिसमस की पूरी मस्ती व्यर्थ है। आइए हम वह जीवन जिएं जो यीशु मसीह चाहते थे कि हम जिएं अपने दुश्मनों को प्यार और क्षमा करना और शांति, आनंद और भाईचारे की नींव पर एक समाज का निर्माण करना। फिर, सहिष्णुता और असहिष्णुता की इन सभी बहसों को समाज में कोई जगह नहीं मिलेगी और हम अपना जीवन परमेश्वर की अपेक्षा के अनुसार जिएंगे, क्योंकि मनुष्य एक दूसरे को अलग करने के बजाय एक दूसरे की मदद कर रहे हैं। क्रिसमस का समय हमारे जीवन में एक नई ताजगी की उम्मीद और एक नई ताकत लेकर आए।

आओ जश्न मनायें, मिलकर प्रभु यीशु का जन्म दिन मनायें।

प्रभु यीशु मसीह हम सभी को आशीष दें!

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