

# THE SECULAR CITIZEN

A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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*Christmas Special 2018*



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**Late Louisa Fernandes (76 years)**

Wife of Francis Fernandes, Cascia

**Departed from this earth - November 15, 2018**

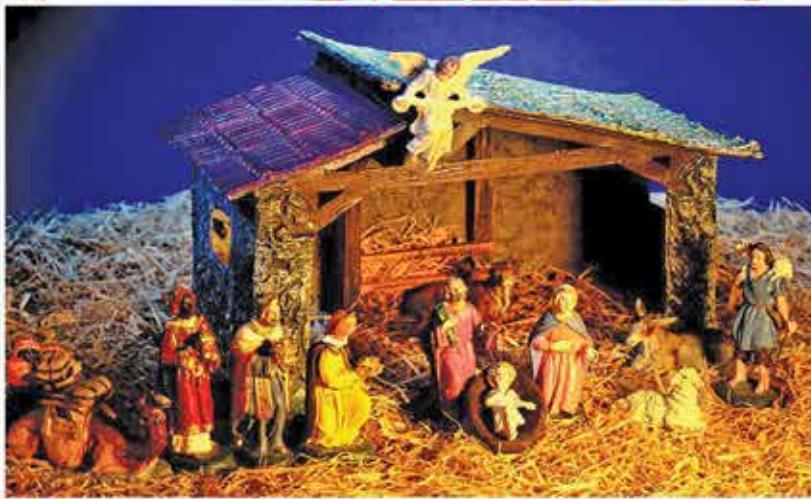
Let's assume that the Sun fails to spread his rays  
The Moon forgets to spread its light, Stars refuse to twinkle  
Flowers may restrain to bloom,  
The sea stops roaring and waves stop flowing  
The candles stop burning and spreading flame  
The birds and flies stop chirping and flying  
The whole earth stops for a while from revolving  
Yet my darling your memory will stay with me, forever.

The love and support you showered on my art and heart  
Was unprecedented, unconditional.  
Hence this tribute as a token of my love for you.  
You will live in my heart, forever  
Please be with me, through the thick and thin of life  
And pray for me in whatever I do best, as an actor,  
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in order to brighten the lives of others.

Your loving husband,  
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&

**A Peace Filled Happy  
New Year 2019**

This is a combined issue for two weeks  
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**C**hristmas marks a turning point both in the Church's Liturgical Calendar as well as in the universal civil calendar in that it stands as the junction of all that was, is and is to come! Against this backdrop, looking back at the year since last Christmas is like looking at oneself in a broken mirror that reflects nothing but the brokenness of human life, **Christmas heralding the possibility of mending that brokenness.** Willy-nilly, the issue of rape [the criminal act involving majors and minors alike] that dominated the news scene, was overshadowed by developments that had the Church reeling under scandals, shattering the myth of the holiness of the ordained both domestically and internationally, whereby even the Sacrament of Reconciliation came in for brazen scrutiny. Allegations and counter allegations have seen the light of day like never before, no less a personage than the Pope himself being accused of a cover-up. The esteem Pakistan earned from the international community when its Supreme Court acquitted Asia Bibi of the wild, unfounded charge of blasphemy and ordered her release, instantly dropped several notches with the kind of protests that



by **Ladislaus L  
D'Souza**

erupted, the government buckling under pressure from fanatics and declaring its readiness to prevent the mother-of-five from leaving the country and allowing for a review petition, in effect signing her death warrant. India struck down Article 377 of the Constitution, decriminalizing gay sex and Article 497, decriminalizing adultery. Several countries have some despot at the helm of affairs playing spoilsport. **What message then does Christmas hold for modern man amidst the turmoil that seems to show no signs of abating? Does Christmas have a place in our world at all?**

#### *The Nativity - Birth of the 'new man'!*

Saint Paul has an amazing explanation for the reason and purpose of the coming of Christ that we celebrate at Christmas: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in Heaven and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him" (Col 1:15-16). He further states that "then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet"

(1 Cor 15:24-25).

Interestingly, the Nativity, an event of cosmic significance, brought forth the "new man" who undid the damage caused by the fall of the first man. Just as the Johannine view of Jesus as the incarnate Logos (Jn 1:14a) proclaims the universal relevance of his birth, the Pauline perspective highlights the birth of a new man and a new world in the Nativity. In Paul's eschatological view, Jesus, in contrast to Adam, the old man given to sin, is the *new man* of morality, fortitude and obedience who ushers in a world of immortality in salvation. Saint Irenaeus [2nd century] wrote: "When he became incarnate and was made man, he commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam – namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God - we might recover in Christ Jesus."

#### **Jesus, the Old Adam - Mary, the New Eve**

The Nativity of Jesus thus began to serve as the starting point for "cosmic Christology" in which the birth, life, death and Resurrection of Jesus have universal implications, the concept of Jesus as the "new man" repeating itself in the cycle of the birth-and-rebirth of Jesus from his Nativity to his Resurrection: following his birth, through his morality and obedience to the Father, Jesus brought into effect a *new harmony* in the relationship between God and man, between the Father and his children. The Nativity and the Resurrection thus created the *author and exemplar* of a new humanity, Jesus!

Irenaeus, who was also one of the early theologians to use the analogy of "second Adam and second Eve", described Mary as the "second eve", asserting that the Virgin Mary had "untied the knot of sin bound up by the virgin Eve" and that just as Eve had set in motion the cycle of disobedience that was to rule human behaviour by tempting

Adam to disobey God, Mary, from the Annunciation right up to Calvary, had chalked a path of obedience for the second Adam, i.e. Jesus, precisely so that Jesus could undo the damage caused by Adam by bringing about salvation.

### **Christmas, sign and celebration of fulfilment**

Understanding the link of all this to the coming of Jesus at Christmas would depend on the depth of our individual perception of Jesus in relation to our redemption. The Father sent his Son to redeem fallen humankind; the Son fulfilled his mission and regained for us the sonship that we had lost with the sin of our First Parents. Though Redemption has been achieved, the effect of the sin of disobedience continues to be evident in the various happenings both in our own country and in the world at large exposing so clearly the multifaceted nature of sin—denial of basic human rights in terms of the choice of food and religion, infidelity to marital and religious vows, lack of common sense in relation to the observance of the First Commandment, legalization of adultery and same-sex unions and so much else. **To subdue all these enemies of humanity the Lord needs the hands and feet of the adherents of the religion of his love to help him. He needs us to evangelize widely!** And this, not so that our numbers might trounce other religions but precisely so that multitudes might know the difference between a God who is real and one that doesn't exist and that, so knowing, may reap the benefit of sharing eternal glory with the Trinity!

### **Fruit of the Church's presence**

Evangelization per se is both the fruit of and an act flowing from a life of edification as exemplified by Bishop George Pallipparambil SDB of Miao whose ministrations in a place that was once forbidden territory had the Lord working amazing miracles! In a clear case of a fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis [12:2-3], Pallipparambil, who having first arrived from

Kerala some 40 years ago without a plan, literally watched the Faith grow from 900 baptized Catholics in 1979 to more than 90,000 today [nearly 20 % of the local population that ethnically consisted of Mongolian tribes often in violent conflict with each other], spread across an area comprising 17,000 square miles and served by 28 priests, with another 68 from religious congregations. When asked how it happened, he simply says, "God did the planning. My job was to listen and respond." Appropriately, when the region was constituted into a diocese in 2005, Pallipparambil was appointed its first bishop. Appropriately, too, both bishop and diocese remain committed to the evangelizing mission!

The decisive moment in Pallipparambil's life of severe trial came when, on Christmas Morning 1980, trudging from village to village preaching the Good News, a layman in tow, he was arrested and interrogated at the regional police headquarters for hours on end. Word of the arrest having got to a nearby village where he had been preaching, a few hundred men, after finishing with their Christmas celebrations, marched to the spot, equipped with swords and torches. Confronting the police superintendent, the tribal chief demanded: "Give me back my father." By one-thirty that night, Father and his companion were dropped back at their mission amidst a people hungering for the Gospel which they found as something very meaningful, it having brought them liberation in a larger sense, giving them as it did a sense of dignity they had never known before. **That night, Christmas reigned supreme in Miao, even as it became obvious that for Pallipparambil it was not a question of "making" converts, but allowing the transformative message of the Gospel speak for itself. How?** "We never concentrated on pushing the Gospel down anyone's throat," he is quick to point out, "our primary goal being to help them—education, medicine, women's empowerment, overcoming illiteracy and animism, getting rid of social evils

like sale and purchase of women and girl-child marriage - whatever, we just did it, living with them, breaking bread with them; they witnessed it firsthand and they understood. Their acceptance of the Gospel was a fruit of our work of love, freely given, ...an actual, direct intervention of the Holy Spirit in their lives." Liberation theology in action! All evil put under the feet of him whose birth heralded the definite possibility of "peace on earth to people of goodwill" [Lk 2:14b]! Well, isn't that precisely what Christmas really is!?! Indeed! Not for nothing did Saint Francis d'Assisi tell his friars: "Go, preach the Gospel! Use words if necessary."

### **Deus natus est**

For Saint Ephrem of 4th century Syria, the uniqueness of the Nativity of Jesus was supplemented with the sign of the Majesty of the Creator through the ability of a powerful God to enter the world as a powerless infant. "Venerate the Nativity, through which you are freed from the bonds of an earthly nativity," urges Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Paul adding: "Just as in Adam all of us died, so too in Christ all of us will be brought to life" (1 Cor 15:22). Jesus, as an obedient Son, fulfilled the divine will and was therefore free from sin, thus revealing the righteousness of the Father in the salvation he wrought for us.

### **Reign, Rule, and Judge**

Amidst the ongoing scenario, a sense of purpose in celebrating Christmas is deepened by Biblical prophecies categorized as follows:

**Reign** – "If we endure, we shall also reign with him," writes Paul to Timothy (2 Tim 2:12). Innumerable are the individuals who endure persecution and torture today as in the days of yore. Their reward is well assured, giving hope to those who see in Christmas the fulfilment of the promise of Redemption, a celebration of which implies joy that is heightened by endurance.

**Rule** – Sacred Scripture declares unequivocally: "And he who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end, to

him I will give power over the nations. He shall rule them with an iron rod; as when earthen pots shall be broken to pieces, just as I myself have also received authority from the Father" (Rev 2:26-27). Could this be construed as implying that the Church will eventually rule the world? Well, why not! Needless to say, what the Church is universally going through is but a passing phase before she holds the reins!

**Judge** – Finally, Scripture holds out an assurance that the believer shall judge the very ones that on earth subdued and subjugate the followers of the Way – "Do you not know that you will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that you will even judge the angels? How much more the things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor 6:2-3)

#### **The glory of Christmas endures**

All said and done, amidst the tumult surrounding us, "each day, according to the spirit of the Church, we can celebrate a new Christmas. There is the eternal birth of the divine Son of the Father, and there is the temporal birth of the Son of God by the Virgin Mary; and there is the real and mystical birth of Jesus Christ in the reception of the Eucharist," avers Blessed James Alberione. And from the Eucharist flows every grace that can enable us to both celebrate and wish the world around a truly joyful and hope-filled Christmas, singing "Glory to God in the highest and peace to people of goodwill!" (Lk 2:14)

# Need for uniformity in the Church

In his Facebook page Fr Joshan Rodrigues , a communication expert, has offered some very sane advice to couples wishing to get married in a parish which is not their home parish. He has advised couples to ascertain the rules and regulations regarding nuptials in that parish . Very often the couples are denied choice of priest, lectors, choir etc leading to considerable embarrassment, annoyance and anxiety on their special day. This advice found immediate resonance with scores of his FB followers. It is a very candid assessment of problems couples face because of different policies followed by parishes. Fr Joshan said "Parish priests should understand that the wedding day is about the couple and not about them". He opined that within resonable limits of maintaining the sanctity of the liturgy, couples should be given freedom to shape what matters to them so that the celebration of the sacrament becomes an occasion of joy for them.

\*\*\*\*\*

I may be a bit harsh, but very often parish priests act like regional satraps laying down inflexible rules. Five years later a newly appointed parish priest may throw out all these rules and impose a new set of rules with his personal stamp on them.

Why should parishes within a diocese follow different rules? The archdiocese must frame uniform rules and regulations which should be adhered to by all parishes. And these rules and regulations must be extended to the administration of other sacraments as well viz., First Holy Communion Confirmation and even funerals These rules should not be left to

the whims and fancies of individual parish priests.

When one parish follows one set of rules which is not the same as another parish it causes much heart-burning , as comparisons can be very odious. In one case a parish priest refused cremation as the deceased had not made a written request. Another parish priest had no such problems. (these cases do not pertain to my parish, but to my cousins from other parishes). In the case of Confirmations the period of instructions must be clearly defined. Some have only one year of instructions (Std XI ) while others have two years (Std X and Std XI. ) Besides some parishes require confirmands to attend a closed retreat which may extent from one day to four days! While others have only a day-long retreat. The duration of retreat must be uniform. My parish insists on a four-day closed retreat. The neighbouring parish has only a day-long retreat. This leads to resentment among students.

In the case of First Holy Communion too there should be uniformity. In my parish children are given a white cape to wear over their dresses/suits. This is a good practice and should be replicated by other parishes . But if this is not uniformly followed it can lead to resentment. One lady was heard exclaiming, " I spent so many thousands of rupees on the dress for my daughter .My princess looks like any ordinary girl ". The ignorant woman forgot that's it's the sacrament of First Holy Communion and not a fashion parade.

**—Prof Robert Castellino  
Mumbai**

# Grateful Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the presence of Almighty LORD for His healing touch, whenever my wife was in great pain and we were deeply stressed out; the doctors and care taker who slogged to give her comfort and a life of less pain, our dear and near ones who constantly inquired about her health during her illness and later upon her unfortunate passing away.

Those who met, called and sent messages through different channels, personally, through phone, WhatsApp, email, who made it a point to attend the funeral and paid last homage, for your soothing words of courage and solidarity.

Both I and my family members shall be ever grateful and immensely indebted.

With kind regards,



*Francis Fernandes, Cascia*



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**WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR - 2019**

# Christmas - on a Solid Foundation

**W**hat is it that comes to mind when we speak of Foundation ? As we commonly know, Foundation is the very basic thing of anything in life. In Education for instance, it is the basic things like learning to read & write, the basic alphabets, numbers, etc., it is with this basic knowledge that we are in a position to move to the next grades in school and then upto college, etc. The basic education is thus the Foundation of our academic excellence. Even so in marriage, religion, starting an organization, building a structure, etc., there is something called a Foundation. **The Family it is said, is the basic unit of society and it is the Foundation on which a good society stands.**

Take a look at your freshly painted flat. You stand before the walls, and say to yourself, wow ! so beautiful, such lovely colours ! The house looks great ! And you are so happy with the painting, so happy with yourself. You appreciate the beautiful colours. But, can we step back for a moment and look at what it is that makes the walls look so beautiful ? What is it at the base of those beautiful colours ? It is the Foundation - the scraping of the walls, and applying a couple of coats of primer. The primer itself may look so bland - lifeless, colourless maybe, just a whitewash sort of. But, it is on this very primer the Foundation, on which the painted colours stand out.



**Melville X. D'Souza  
- Orlem, Malad West**

It is because of this Foundation that the colours look so beautiful. **But alas, that Foundation is forgotten and it is only the colours that are appreciated and cherished for a long time to come.**

What about our Faith, Christianity ? Do we ever stop to think, what is the Foundation of Christianity ? We did learn in our early Cathechism classes that Jesus was born like any other human being. He had no place to be born and so he had to be born in a stable among the cattle. **It was humble Foundation.** We learnt that

Jesus went on to preach in the temples and synagogues and taught people right from wrong. He was born to bring us out of sin and into a new world. And then, he was put to death - a death upon a cross. That was the end ! We seem to have forgotten Jesus. **We seem to have forgotten that Jesus is the Foundation of our Faith, Christianity !**

Year after year, we celebrate Christmas - decorations, erecting various types of cribs in our homes, in our localities, in our churches - cribs with special Themes, bringing out some message for the people. We have Christmas parties in our sectors/zones. We may have Christmas get-together programmes on the parish grounds. Family gatherings during the Christmas season are fun. **But in all this excitement and fun, do we stop to think what is it at the**



**very base of all these celebrations ? Why is it that we are celebrating Christmas ? Do we stop to think what is the Foundation of these Christmas celebrations ?** Perhaps not, and how would this matter to us, we may tend to think. This is the Christmas season so there isn't any reason..... that is what we think ? **We forget, Jesus is the Reason for the Season; He is the Foundation of the feast of Christmas. We seem to have forgotten Jesus himself, who is the Foundation of our Christian lives.**

We have heard of something called the 'Foundation Stone'. A **foundation stone**, we know, is a stone laid at a ceremony to celebrate the beginning of construction of a building, a basic or essential element of something - it is the basic, important thing ! **God laid the Foundation stone of Christianity in this world, of His kingdom, in the form of Jesus.** Was that a strong Foundation ? We have seen

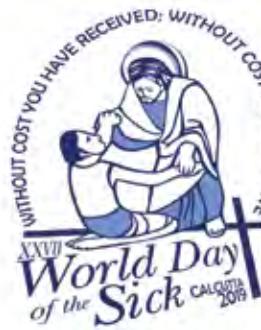
structures crumbling to the ground on account of weak foundations. We see our very lives at times, breaking down in the face of adversities, being rocked by controversies, onslaught from the media, the internet, from the world around us. We wonder, in this situation, how long can our lives last ? **"Nothing can last when the foundation is weak, neither a home nor a relationship,"** says Mohith Agadi, an Author & Entertainment Journalist, Very true ! So where do we stand ? Over the recent past, the Church which Jesus founded, has been rocked by controversies. Before we come to the conclusion that Foundation of the Church is weak, let us understand one thing - **Jesus is the Foundation of the Church and it cannot be a weak Foundation. The Church is built on solid rock. Jesus has built the Church with his sweat & blood and with a lots of Love & Passion for human kind. With a foundation like that, the Church can withstand and overcome all persecutions, adversities, etc., weather any storm. Yes, there will be martyrdom, blood will flow. But all this would not be in vain, for the Foundation of our faith is strong.**

**We need to remind ourselves that Jesus is the Foundation of our faith and we need to keep our relationship with Jesus, alive. "There is only one secure foundation: a genuine, deep relationship with Jesus Christ, which will carry you through any and all turmoil. No matter what storms are raging all around, you'll stand firm if you stand on His love",** says Charles Stanley, the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. **Christmas is based on this Foundation and we shall continue to celebrate Christmas - the birth-day of this Foundation, called JESUS ! Christmas - on a Solid Foundation !**

## KOLKATA TO HOST THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE SICK

by DOMINIC J. AZAVEDO

The World Day of the Sick will be celebrated in Kolkata on February 9, 10 and 11, 2019. It was introduced by Pope John Paul II on 13th May, 1992 and is celebrated on the Feast of our Lady of Lourdes – 11th February. The day is also the anniversary of his 1984 Apostolic Letter *Salvificidoloris* on the Christian meaning of human suffering.



Kolkata is chosen to celebrate the XXVII Word Day of the Sick (WDS) to honour mainly "in light of the experience of St. Teresa of Calcutta," to quote Peter Cardinal. Kodwo A. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery organising the World Day. This is only the second time a place in India has been chosen, the first was Vailankanni.

To quote, the initiator of the Day: *"The annual celebration of the "World Day of the Sick", therefore, has the manifest purpose of making the People of God and, as a consequence, the many Catholic health care institutions and civil society itself, more aware of the necessity of ensuring the best possible care for the infirm, of helping the sick person to make the most of suffering, on the human level, but most of all on the supernatural one, of especially helping the Dioceses, Christian communities and religious families to be involved in the health care apostolate, of enhancing the ever more valuable commitment of volunteers, of reminding people of the importance of the spiritual and moral training of health care workers and, last of all, of creating a better understanding of the importance of religious care for the sick among diocesan and religious priests,*

*as well as among those who live and work at the side of the person in pain."*

The programme includes Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of Calcutta, releasing a prayer which was released at the Annual Corpus Christi Celebration on St. Xavier's Ground on 25th November, 2018. This prayer has to be said in all churches and homes till February 11th, 2019. The theme of the Day is: "Without cost you

have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt: 10:8). A international logo has been designed by Mr. Farrell Shah, Director, Archdiocese Social Service Commission. (as you can see it above)

The tentative programme is: 4 Sessions followed by a Mass at Mother House, Kolkata for the delegates, visits to three care centres in Kolkata, followed by meetings of National health representatives with the Dicastery representation. Public Solemn Mass in the afternoon, including anointing of the sick by the various bishops, at St. Xavier's College, Holy Mass and anointing of the sick at Bandel Basilica.

Along with the 50 foreign delegates and expected 200 national/regional ones, the Vatican will send a Papal Delegate, most probably in the person of Peter Cardinal K A Turkson. CBCI President, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, and the Nuncio to India, Archbishop Giambattista D'Uquattro, will also preside over the main Services. Parishes will also be encouraged to host their own celebrations of the Day, including a diocese-wise celebratory Mass in every Church on Sunday 10 February, 2019.



# Silent Night.

**"Silent night, Holy night,"** the choir sang melodiously at Christmas during the midnight mass. Silent Night was originally composed in German by Franz Xaver Gruber in 1818. It sent out a message of peace, goodwill, love and universal brotherhood.

In Simon and Garfunkel's haunting rendition of the song in 1968, there is the 7 o'clock news broadcast in the background. This broadcast is about growing noise, violence, murder, demonstrations and mayhem. It gets louder and louder until it ends with the end of the song. The 7 o'clock news/ Silent Night dwells on the war in Vietnam, drug overdose and the escalation of crime. This version of Silent Night drives home the point that Christ's message of peace is overshadowed by hate and violence.

There are two types of peace - within each one of us and in the world we live in a highly competitive and consumeristic world. There is no peace within as we struggle to survive in the rat race. This results in discord in the family. Children, right from an early age, are being pushed to excel which results in a lot of stress. We are blindly aping the West and getting increasingly individualistic and selfish.

The family is the smallest unit of soci-

ety. The stress within the family spills over to whoever we are in contact with. On a societal scale, politicians pit people one against the other on the basis of caste, language and community. If we need a blood transfusion, do we ask whether the donor belongs to our community? Then why are we prejudiced against people of another community? It is sometimes very frustrating to deal with bureaucracy with countless forms to be filled in triplicate. The voices of sanity and peace are submerged in a sea of violence with civil wars being waged in different parts of the world.



by Monica Fernandes

Silent days and silent nights are a dream. Everybody is rushing. Even when one has stopped one's car because the signal is red, the guy in the vehicle behind will keep on honking. Does he expect the car before him to suddenly develop wings and fly? One goes to a party in a hall and the music is blaring. High decibel levels increase our stress levels and affect our hearing. But is anyone listening?

We are becoming increasingly selfish, focusing on temporary pleasures, on clothes, accessories, cosmetics, expensive jewelry, holidays to exotic places. There is nothing wrong in our enjoying ourselves but it is disquiet-

# Really?

ing to witness a society that has gone berserk on self indulgence without a thought for others. Selfish brats feel no turmoil within but, with increasing aspirations, there is bound to be an adverse reaction among the have-nots who do not have two meals a day when they witness this profligacy.

It is of paramount importance that each one of us consciously reduces our stress levels through various methods such as exercise, prayers, yoga, meditation and pursuing hobbies. Pleasure and fun are not the be-all-and-end-all of life. Each of us can do our bit to alleviate the suffering of others, to use our time and talents for the upliftment of those who are marginalized. The change to a peaceful society starts with the individual, the family and then society.

There was a welcome change this Diwali in Mumbai when more and more people chose not to burst noisy crackers, thus leading to a decrease in noise and better air quality. The media has played its part by increasing awareness among revelers. Young people too could be a positive influence within the family and among their peer group by explaining the adverse effects of crackers.

Rome was not built in a day. It takes time to change ingrained customs and practices. But a determined and persuasive young generation who channel their youthful energies in the right direction will ensure that we have silent days and silent nights.

# Give Us 'Today' Our Daily Christmas!

Many of us are familiar with the 7 Petitions of the "Our Father"! The above plea, "Give us 'Today' or (this day)", belongs to the 'forth petition' (*Matthew 6:11*). So here I would like to expand on the word "today", through 7 quotations from Sacred Scripture!

Visualize Infant Jesus speaking to humanity from the crib. St. Faustina revealed in her *Diary - Divine Mercy in My Soul*: "I keep company with you as a Child to teach you humility and simplicity./ Contemplate the profound love and infinite Mercy of God, coming to you through this warm and unconditional embrace of the little Child Jesus reaching out to you. Embrace Him and hold Him tightly" (#184/#1442). So let us ponder: "In the beginning the Word was God/ Who became Flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth" (*John 1:1ff/14*).

1. "God blessed the 'seventh day' and set it apart as a special day" (*Genesis 2:3*). Also known as the "Sabbath", its legal observances began only after Moses received the Ten Commandments (*Exodus 31:13*). Even Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach, as was His custom (*Luke 4:16ff*).

2. "The 'day' of the Lord commands His steadfast love; so that I may have a song at night, a prayer to the God of my life" (*Psalm 42:8*). The Lord's loving kindness or 'Divine Mercy' manifested during the day, is a welcome relief for all who work tirelessly out-

side in offices, factories and in fields, as well as inside homes. St. Therese, the Little Flower wrote in her *Autobiography*: "Jesus has chosen to show me the only way that leads to the 'Divine furnace of Love'! It is the way of a childlike self-surrender; of a child who sleeps unafraid in God's arms!"

3. "*This is the 'day of the Lord's victory! Let us rejoice and be glad*" (*Psalm 118:24*). And why not! In the previous two verses, "the stone that the builders rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone, a marvel in our eyes" (vs. 22-23). It refers to Jesus and was even quoted by Him (*Mark 12:10-11*). St. Peter in his First Letter warns: "To you who believe, the Stone is precious; but for you who do not believe, the Stone makes you stumble, a Rock that makes you fall" (1/ 2:7-8).

4. "*Thus says the Lord, 'In the time of favor I answered you, and in the 'day of salvation' I helped you, and gave you as a covenant to the peoples'*" (*Isaiah 49:8*). Today, the Catholic Church with the Pope as the visible head is the New Covenant to the nations. This salvation history was inaugurated through the *Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin Mary! It will continue till Jesus' second coming!

5. "*I have relied on You since my birth. It was You Who took me from my mother's womb. / So 'every day' I will bless You and praise You*" (*Psalm 72:6/145:2*). The praises to the Divine Babe are endless; and start at the humble manger crib. At Jesus' triumphant entry into

Jerusalem He revealed: "Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies comes forth perfect praise" (*Matthew 21:16*).

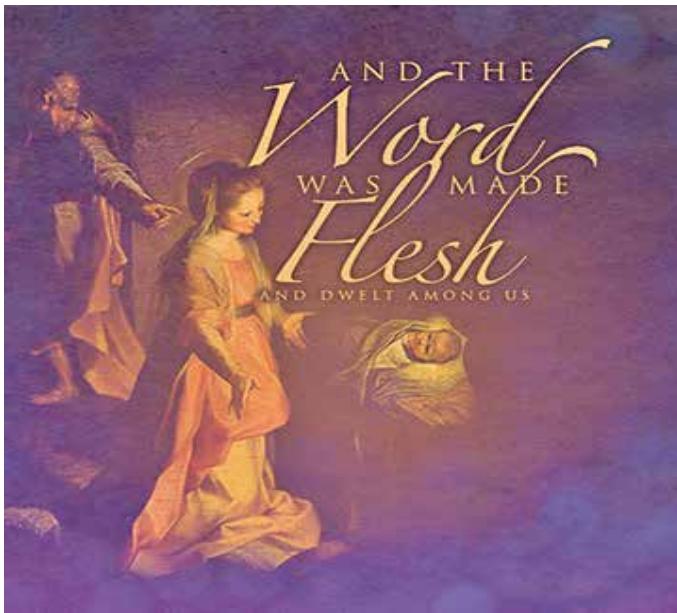
6. "*Truly I tell you, 'today' you will be with Me in Paradise*" (*Luke 23:43*). Listen to the good thief's meek plea of mercy to Jesus to remember him in His kingdom (vs. 42). Jesus' promise is for all penitent sinners. He has conferred the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation! (*John 20:22-23*). The Baby Jesus is often shown with His right hand raised in blessing, just as in the 'Divine Mercy' image!

7. "*Exhort one another 'every day', as long as it is called 'today', so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partners with Christ!* As it is written, 'Today', if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (*Hebrews 3:13-15*). The Infant Jesus invites us: "Come to Me, all you that are weary from carrying heaven burdens. I AM gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (*Matthew 11:28-30*).

So we hope: "By the 'tender Mercy' of Our God, the 'Dawn' (Today) from on high will break upon us, to give Light to those who sit in the shadow of darkness and death" (*Luke 1:78-79*).

—Dr. Trevor Colaso,  
Bandra West, Mumbai.

# Christmas is the Word made Flesh



BY MELVYN BROWN

**C**hristmas is a sublime and inspiring festival which brings the completion of God's plan for humanity on the first Pentecost Day. The Christ child in the manger is God's infinite love sent to us. At Christmas the Messiah Jesus Christ is born in each one of us, thanks be to the Lord God Almighty.

Thanking God is to glorify Him in profound reverence which leads to adoration; to gaze at the babe in the crib or the Host in the Eucharist. For a flash of bliss like the saints experience in moments of deep reverence, can be our own if we could have this encounter in moving out of ourselves for a few brief seconds.

Before midnight mass on Christmas Eve a Christian Mystic told me, "There is no better person than a person who performs as God wills, in baptism the Holy Spirit comes upon us and we receive a new life with 'free will'.

How we choose to live depends on the seeds of direction we receive in our early years. Go, my child, you have chosen your path." I rose from the confessional and went to the large crib by the altar's side to thank God for coming to us.

The first Christmas Day was an awe-

some chapter in the history of the Christian Church. There were shepherds in the open field who heard angels singing. The Star of Bethlehem was like a large diamond in the face of a million tiny star scattered curtain of sky. In the distance were the three kings riding on camels from the East bearing gifts. And there, in a corner of the crowded village stood a barn for farm animals. Near the entrance to the barn sat the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus wrapped in clothe and beside hem stood Joseph, the foster father of the Lord Jesus, born in a manger.

Midnight Mass reminds us of that first Christmas, simple, holy and silent. The world would change and evil, sinful men would discover hope, salvation and learn of a righteous way to God's Kingdom. To all people in the world, Jesus says, 'I am the Way, and the truth (John 14:16) and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' Christmas is truly the Word of God made human, the infinite Lord has entered the finite flesh, because His love and mercy knows no bounds.

The heights of prayer plunge us into a profound experience of God, the Lord of creation who made his incorruptible love enter the flesh and to change our

ways permanently when we delve into our heart and absorb the spark of spiritual reverence, we can feel for a brief moment the inner world of God's glory in eternity.

Christmas is a time to remember when God came to bear witness and introduce the light, so that the world may believe and be redeemed. The Lord gave Moses the law, but truth, love and mercy came through Christ. No one had ever seen God, but the creator made himself seen through his Son Jesus.

In the Gospel of John, we are told that in the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. We know all this and more from Gospel: Jn.1:1-18.

This Christmas we will make a gift of faith to support our suffering Church and her people. Across the world Christians are in dire need of pastoral comfort. Let us prepare to build a spiritual fortress to defend our trust in God who is in all of us, and is with all of us. The prophet John was assured by the Holy Spirit that God would fulfill his promise in giving the Israelites their Messiah. John's message by the river Jordon was uncompromising calling all to repentance, to have a change of heart, to feel sorrow for sins and to find remission by accepting baptism.

The voice of the prophet echoes today as we prepare to receive Jesus his season of advent, for it is truly the time of year when we remember the birth of Christ our Lord, the Word made flesh. Glory to God in the high heavens and on earth peace to men.

# Christmas: The unique manifestation of the Absolute Godhead.

The mystery of our salvation began over 2000 years ago when God entered the world by being born of a virgin and became man. We rejoice in this mystery every Christmas, because it was the greatest event in history, when God became a human being, but did not lose his divinity. Our Christian faith is rooted in this fundamental truth of revelation that the babe in the manger is God among us, the word made flesh. Unlike other manifestations of the divine in other religions, Jesus Christ in human form was the fullest and the unique manifestation of the Absolute Godhead --- the incarnate Word, true God and true man, "One in the Father and the Father in Him". His birth was announced by the angel of the Lord in two different annunciations --- one to Joseph and one to Mary.



**BY A. F. NAZARETH**

In the infancy narrative of Luke, there is a two-fold identity of Jesus. "The Lord will give Him the kingdom of his ancestor David, and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Lk. 1: 32-33) and secondly, "---- the child to be born will be holy and will be called the son of God" (Lk 1: 35). Jesus is therefore both, Son of David and son of God. Luke also gives importance to the manger, referring to it three times: " And she gave birth to her first born son and wrapped him

in bands of cloth and laid him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk, 2: 7) Also, the angels announced it to the shepherds

" You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in the manger" (Lk. 2: 13). Thirdly, The shepherds go in search " So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph , and the child lying in the manger" (Lk. 2: 16). The son of God was thus born poor , with no worldly possessions , to reveal God's solidarity with the poor.

The Jews rejected Jesus because they believed that the Messiah would come in power and glory as a successor to king David. But it was not so in God's plan of salvation. Jesus the Messiah came in poverty , not in power . He lived a life serving others , because God's kingdom which he preached and revealed is unlike the kingdoms of this world, as it is rooted in humility and service to humanity.



The birth of Jesus is also the good news of peace , love and joy which was announced by the angels to the shepherds" Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will " (Lk. 2: 14) Wise men from the East were also guided by the mysterious star of Bethlehem which brought them to the place where Jesus was born. Christmas should remind us of God's unconditional love for us, because " God so loved the world that He gave us his only son Jesus Christ." Jesus also gave his disciples a new commandment to " love one another as I have loved you" ( Jn . 13: 34). Let us therefore celebrate the joyous event of Christmas with love by welcoming Jesus into our heart and proclaiming his message of peace , love and joy, for there can be no greater joy than to know Christ Jesus . We prepared ourselves for his coming during the season of advent. Let us now celebrate his arrival on Christmas day with joy.

**A Merry Christmas to all.**

# Christmas Musings

## Celebrate Christmas with Gratitude

There is an imaginative story told of a day when the sun did not rise. Six o'clock came and there was no sign of dawn. At seven o'clock, there was still no ray of light. At noon it was as black as midnight. No birds sang and only the hoot of an owl broke the silence. Then came the long black hours of the afternoon. Finally evening arrived but no one slept at night, Some wept, some wrung their hands in anguish. Every church was thronged with people on their knees. Thus they remained the whole night through. After that long night of terror and agony, millions of eager, tear-streaked faces were turned toward the east. When the sky began to grow red and the sun rose, there was a loud shout of joy. Millions of lips said, "Bless the Lord O my soul!" because the sun had risen after one day of darkness.

The very consistency of God's blessings sometimes seems to dull our gratitude. The wonderful thing about the mercies of God is that they are fresh every morning and new every evening. Let us remember to be consistently thankful to our gracious God.  
Unknown

Some one amplified the word 'Thankful,' with a acrostic Scripture reference

This is an acrostic on the beautiful word thankful

Truth: And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free ( John 8: 32)

Heaven: But as it is written "what no

eyes has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those love him" (1 Cor 2:9)

Armour of God: Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of devil ( ephesians 6:1

Neighbours; Let each of us please his neighbour for his good to build him up Rom 15.2

Kindness; Be Kind to one another, tender-hearted forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness I John 1:19

Ultimate Sacrifice: For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit 1 Pet 3:18

Love: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life John 3:16

## Celebrate Christmas with Colours

This is poem on the The Colours of Christmas: The colours of Christmas are bright and they are true they tell of God's great love for me and you. Blue is the sky where the angels appeared as they sang "Peace on Earth:, to



**Fr. George  
Olivera OFM  
Cap, Mysore**

shepherds who feared. Silver is for the bright Christmas star which guided the Wise men from countries afar. Gold is tells of their gifts for the Baby that day who they found in a manger, asleep on the hay. Purple for suffering and death on a hill. Red is the blood, which Jesus did spill. Green shows that Jesus arose from the dead And saved us and freed us, just as he said.

## Celebrate Christmas with Lectio Divina

Some Biblical lovers have summarized the Bible in just fifty words. It is nice to make the Bible our Mother tongue by making it a habitual daily Lectio Divina:

### The Bible in fifty words

God Creates; Adam ate; Noah floats; Abraham's oath; Jacob schemes; Joseph dreams; Bush lit; Sea split; Law spoken; Tablets broken; Judges appointed; Kings anointed; God forgotten; Rulers rotten; Kingdoms broken; Prophets Hope; Mary favoured; Baby Saviour; Crucified; Jesus died; Third Morn; World reborn; Spirit glows; Love grows; Earth awaits; God creates...

## Celebrating Christmas with a gift love wrap

This is a touching story of little girl who presents gift to her loving dad.

Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold

wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

### **Make Christmas a Neighbourly Affair**

This little poem entitled: The dirty old shoe man quite inspirational during the Christmas Season.

I showered and shaved...I adjusted my tie. I got there and sat ...In a pew just in time. Bowing my head in prayer ... As I closed my eyes. I saw the shoe of the man next to me ... Touching my own. I sighed. With plenty of room on either side... I thought, "Why must our soles touch?"

It bothered me, his shoe touching mine... But it didn't bother him much.

A prayer began: "Our Father" ... I thought, "This man with the shoes ... has no pride. They're dusty, worn, and scratched ... Even worse, there are holes on the side!"

"Thank You for blessings," ...the prayer went on. The shoe man said ... a quiet "Amen." I tried to focus on the prayer ... But my thoughts were on his shoes again. Aren't we supposed to look our best ... When walking through that door? "Well, this certainly isn't it," I thought, Glancing toward the floor. Then the prayer was ended ...And the songs of praise began. The shoe man was certainly loud ... Sounding proud as he sang. His voice lifted the rafters ... His hands were raised high.

The Lord could surely hear ... The shoe man's voice from the sky.

It was time for the offering ...And what I threw in was steep.

I watched as the shoe man reached .. Into his pockets so deep. I saw what was pulled out ... What the shoe man put in. Then I heard a soft "clink" ... as when silver hits tin.

The sermon really bored me ...To tears, and that's no lie It was the same for the shoe man ...For tears fell from his eyes. At the end of the service ... As is the custom here We must greet new visi-

tors ... And show them all good cheer.

But I felt moved somehow ... And wanted to meet the shoe man So after the closing prayer ...I reached over and shook his hand.

He was old and his skin was dark ... And his hair was truly a mess But I thanked him for coming ...For being our guest. He said, "My names' Charlie ...

I'm glad to meet you, my friend." There were tears in his eyes ... But he had a large, wide grin "Let me explain," he said ...Wiping tears from his eyes.

"I've been coming here for months ... And you're the first to say 'Hi.'"

"I know that my appearance ... Is not like all the rest "But I really do try ...

"To always look my best." "I always clean and polish my shoes ... "Before my very long walk. "But by the time I get here ... "They're dirty and dusty, like chalk."

My heart filled with pain ... and I swallowed to hide my tears As he continued to apologize ... For daring to sit so near.

He said, "When I get here ... "I know I must look a sight. "But I thought if I could touch you ... "Then maybe our souls might unite." I was silent for a moment ... Knowing whatever was said Would pale in comparison ... I spoke from my heart, not my head.

"Oh, you've touched me," I said ... "And taught me, in part; "That the best of any man ... "Is what is found in his heart." The rest, I thought, ... This shoe man will never know. Like just how thankful I really am ... That his dirty old shoe touched my soul. -anonymous

### **Celebrating Christmas with Wit and Fervour**

Then there's the rumor that the three

wise men who visited Jesus in Bethlehem were really three Catholic priests: a Franciscan, a Benedictine, and a Jesuit. The Franciscan was particularly concerned that the animals were properly sheltered and fed. The Benedictine made sure that all was liturgically proper: that Mary was kneeling with head bowed toward the manger, that Joseph was dutifully standing nearby with a lantern in one hand and a staff in the other, that the shepherds were carrying a sheep on their shoulders, and that the choir of angels were harmonizing to the right songs for the season. The Jesuit, without hesitating a moment, stepped over to Joseph, tapped Joseph's staff to get his attention, and asked, "What are you going to do about the little fellow's college education?" Alleluia!

#### Celebrating Christmas for communal Harmony

Here is a delightful story that comes like a breath of fresh air in a world riven by communal clashes and religious

differences

A number of pigeons lived happily on the rooftop of an ancient temple. When the temple was renovated for the annual festival, the pigeons relocated to a church nearby. The pigeons who were already living in the church accommodated the newcomers very well.

When Christmas was nearing and the church was being given a facelift, all the pigeons had to move out and look for another place. They were fortunate enough to find a place in a mosque in the vicinity. The pigeons in the mosque welcomed all of them happily.

Then came Ramadan time and the mosque was repainted, so all the pigeons now came to stay in the ancient temple which had now been renovated.

One day, the pigeons atop the temple were witness to communal clashes taking place below in a market square.

The puzzled baby pigeon asked the mother pigeon, "Who are these people?"

The mother replied: "They are human be-

ings." The baby asked, "But why are they fighting with each other?" The mother said, "The human beings going to temples are called 'Hindus' and the people going to church are called 'Christians' and the people going to mosque are called 'Muslims'.

The baby pigeon asked, "Why is it so? When we were in the temple we were called pigeons, when we were in the church we continued to be called pigeons and when we were in the mosque, we were still called pigeons. Similarly, they should be called just 'human beings' wherever they go."

The mother pigeon said, "You and me and our pigeon friends have experienced God and that's why we are living here in a highly elevated place peacefully. These people are yet to experience God. Hence, they are living below us and fighting and killing each other."

May Emmanuel God-With-Us dwell within us to protect; May He be above us to Bless; May He be around us to guide our way and accompany us during this Christmas-tide and days of the New Year 2019. A Blessed Christmas of the Child of Bethlehem the Prince of Peace.

*Wish you a Merry Christmas  
& a Happy New Year 2019*

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## Divinity, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Jubel D'Cruz in Voice of the People, The Secular Citizen, 10-16 December 2018 titled, "Christ in the Quran", is deficient! Because, he does not mention that the Quran denies the Divinity of Jesus Christ (cf. 5:17, 72); as well as His Crucifixion (4:157), and His subsequent Resurrection! All these truths are central to Christianity! With all due respects to Muslims, I would like to present them the data in the Bible!

The New Testament is full of references to the Divinity of Christ (Messiah). Let me quote just four verses: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1) "They shall call Him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us'!" (Matthew 1:23). "Though Christ was in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave" (Philippians 2:6-7). "We wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Regarding Christ's Crucifixion, there is ample evidence in the Gospels; as well as in the Shroud of Turin! But the Resurrection is the 'Core of Christianity'! As St Paul reveals: "If Christ had not been 'raised', then our proclamation is in vain, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:14; 17). The Catechism of the Catholic Church clarifies: "God's plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator; in the first place amongst whom are Muslims" (article 841).

**—Dr. Trevor Colaso, Bandra West, Mumbai.**

## The feast of St. Bonaventure at Erangal

The famous church of St. Bonaventure, a 16th century Portuguese church is situated on the beach in Erangal in Malad (West), Mumbai. The annual Erangal feast held on the second Sunday of January, celebrating the feast day of St. Bonaventure, attracts over four lakh people of all faiths and communities to this scenic spot.

To celebrate this feast, people travel by buses, tongas and bullock carts. The feast is patronised mostly by people belonging to the East Indian Catholic community. But now-a-days, other communities partake in it as well. The day starts with attending the Holy Mass at the famous Church of St. Bonaventure situated on the beach in Erangal. Thereafter, people start enjoying themselves by going for horse rides, camel rides, giant wheel rides and other rides available on the beach front. There are also stalls for different kinds of games like throwing rings, shooting the balloons, etc. Some people do live cooking in the open air wadis, while others prepare their food at home and bring them in huge tiffin boxes. Lots of East Indian Marathi songs are played throughout the day. Some of the well-known ones are 'Sakalche Para' and 'Gaylan Sakli'. People visit each other and the day is spent eating, drinking and merry making. In the evening, the fisher-women in their traditional nav vari lugras (nine-yard sarees), wearing the same colours, dance to their Marathi songs along the beach to celebrate this feast.

**--- Jubel D'Cruz**





# Santa Claus is coming to town!

## Santa Claus is coming to Town

**C**elebrated on December 25 with much pomp and pageantry all over the world, Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ for the believers. Marked by traditions that originated in the realms of History and symbols closely associated with the birth of Jesus, it is a season to renew and rebuild relationships and a time to share and care!

Most Christmas symbols gaily adorning homes, institutions and places of worship have come down to us from various Pagan sources of the middle ages. Poinsettias, Christmas bells, wreaths and lights create a magical world filled with joy and goodwill, the hallmark of this festival. The evergreen fir tree, decorated with



by Vera Alvares

miniature symbols like bells and stars, lights, angel figurines, candy canes, ice flakes and other baubles is placed at a strategic spot in the living room to exalt the value of life, a life gifted to us through the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a reminder that the evergreen fir survives the onslaught of cold and snow in winter to become a sign of undying life. A replica of the scene of Jesus' birth is another Christmas symbol reproduced with much planning and skillful execution. A star reminiscent of the star of Bethlehem is used to welcome Jesus into the home. And there are Carols, Christmas songs with lyrics and music to replicate the imagery of Christ's birth.

As children, which one of us has not joined in the chorus of "Jingle bells...", that merry ditty about Santa and his sleigh

at Christmas time? We know the Carol, "Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer had a very shiny nose.....". But do we know that because one foggy Christmas Eve Santa came to say- "Rudolph, with your nose so bright won't you guide my sleigh tonight?", Rudolph has been firmly placed in the annals of History! No Christmas can exist without the chubby, cheerful Santa Claus with a sack full of gifts for children and his reindeer that take him to the corners of the world.

The legend of Santa Claus has developed from the life of St. Nicholas who was a Bishop in Asia Minor (now called Turkey). Being fond of children and generous to a fault he used the handsome inheritance his parents left him to help the poor and give secret gifts to children. In 16th Century Holland, Dutch children would place their wooden shoes by the hearth on Christmas

Eve, with the hope that they would be filled with goodies and gifts. The wooden shoes and later the stockings that replaced them were indeed filled with gifts in the name of St. Nicholas who later became the legend of Santa Claus.

It would not be difficult to imagine what problems the modern-day Santa would face this Christmas on his journey across the heavens. This is the story of the lovable Santa and his loyal reindeer- Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner Blitzen and Rudolph.

That night the world shivered in the grip of winter. On a cold desolate icy stretch close to the North Pole, preparations were on to spread the joy of Christmas around the world. Pushing up his spectacles on his nose at regular intervals, Santa had been submerged in a sea of letters from children for the past three days. They were the innocent ones who had a firm belief in Father Christmas and his generous gifts. Year after year Santa toiled to collect and disperse gifts to kids who had asked for them. At last it was done. With his sleigh piled high with beautiful packages of all shapes and sizes, he was ready to zoom across the heavens with his reindeer flying on the wings of hope! But where were his little helpers?

Santa's sharp whistle summoning his reindeer echoed across the vast white terrain but there was no sign of a single one of them. All eight of them, despite their Dutch, British and mixed ancestry, were a close-knit group and Rudolph being the youngest, and the latest addition to the team was always brimming with news and views! At last small dots that appeared over the horizon

gradually took the shape of creatures, his own reindeer. Santa knew that since that fateful foggy Christmas night onwards, when he had asked Rudolph to guide his sleigh, the other reindeer had followed him blindly! Now on perceiving that Rudolph was leading the team with a purposeful stride, the twinkle in Santa's eyes disappeared. As he waited for them, Santa offered a silent prayer to the little babe in Bethlehem, the glad tidings of whose birth he was carrying.

The reindeer had organized a protest march. Yes, there were complaints and a sensible dialogue was in order. Rudolph had listed their grievances and appointed Prancer as their spokesperson. A discreet nod from Rudolph set Prancer in motion, tiptoeing around, trying to recall the complaints he had memorized. But alas, he had forgotten every single word he had been coached to say. How he wished he had flicked one of those smart phones they were giving the children the previous year, to put his thoughts down!

Rudolph's grievances were genuine and worrisome. Global Warming had caused the ice caps at North Pole and on all the mountain tops to thaw and melt. Temperatures were soaring and moving down South, away from the snow bound North Pole was not advisable. The trail across the heavens was foggy and filled with pollutants like smoke, dust, poisonous gases due to which he could not cease sneezing and feeling sick. In the smog-laden sky they very often lost their way! Subsequently gifts were delivered to the wrong houses, making the children unhappy and tearful.

There was more. In the countries they visited, land had turned barren and yielded no grass and clean drinking water was scarce. They would starve to death.... Santa who had been listening attentively stopped Rudolph at that point. He pushed his spectacles up his nose once again and a benign smile lit up his rugged features. He caressed each one of his reindeer lovingly as he murmured soothing words in their ears. Then, dancing and prancing down memory lane he led the reindeer to recall their numerous visits that had indeed spread long-lasting joy in the lives of children.

Together they visualized their past gift-giving sprees. The little girl in Russia had gradually blossomed into a Ballet dancer after receiving the gift of a pretty pair of ballet shoes they had given her. A single child somewhere else now had a little brother to play with. The blind one with blue eyes and golden curls had regained her eyesight and was teaching children in an orphanage. The budding mechanic, who had asked for a toy electric car, had found his true calling and now was designing cars in Germany. Santa paused to say- what are a few pin-pricks in the face of so much joy .....suddenly he felt all alone and realized that he was speaking to an empty landscape, his audience had disappeared! Scanning the area, he slowly turned around and was stunned to see that all eight of his reindeer had hitched themselves to the sleigh and were clamoring to be on their way. Rudolph's red nose was shining like a beacon!

***Wishing Santa a safe flight  
and a Holy, Blessed Christmas  
to all God's people!***



## - The Universal Connectivity

**by Don Aguiar.**

**C**hristmas comes once a year, but it takes over the lives of those of us who are not even nominal Christians. Christmas is a bonanza for retailers and sales outlets. People go into debt to buy what they neither need, nor want, nor can afford.

This commercial Christmas spirit cares not whether one is a devout deist, a committed agnostic or atheist. It makes no distinction between an observant Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jew or Sikh. In some ways, we all love it and we all live it. It knits together diverse people and many esoteric faiths and festivals.

Minorities do not live a secluded ex-

istence inside impenetrable barriers – that would become an unacceptable ghetto. Majoritarian cultural practices continue to seep into the traditions of minorities communities. And quite unexpectedly, minorities often adjust their holidays somewhat to piggyback on the celebrations of the majority community.

Diwali, for instance, stems from Hindu mythology, with tenuous or no connection to Sikh, Islam, Christianity or Judaism. Yet, irrespective of religious persuasion, it would be a rare Indian who did not observe this national holiday. In India, it is Diwali that intrudes into Christian space and colours its traditions; in the West, it is Christmas. No one is an island.

In the Indian lunar calendar, the birthday – gurpurab (literally, day of the

Guru) — of the tenth Sikh Master, Guru Gobind Singh, falls close to Christmas. That allows Sikhs to merge Sikh celebration with Christmas and its practices – dinners, lighting of houses, and exchange of presents. They can then practice their own tradition citing similarities in practice and in spreading the Christian message of the season – peace on earth and goodwill to all men.....

Does this piggybacking dilute the message? Perhaps, but not the spirit or the intent; it helps us to see the universal connectivity that underlies our common humanity. It also encourages inter-religious harmony which in India is the need of the hour.

Mahatma Gandhi the father of the Indian nation said, "I do not want my India to be walled in on all sides and its

windows stuffed. I want the culture and tradition of all the lands to blow about my India freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown of my feet by any." Bravo.

If you are feeling despair at the ominous-looking situation on this wonderful earth or in experiencing the Indian right wing communal agenda being forcefully enforced with your political rights trampled upon – just remember what the Babe Jesus teaches us at this time of the year, for those who try to oppress us are our brothers and sisters who has forgotten that India is a secular democratic country – bless them so they can find their way to change their attitude to peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

And if Christmas brings you sadness when the whole message is to rejoice and be merry - Just remember Christ message during Christmas is rejoice and be merry. But this is not the message of Christianity. Christianity message is; be sad, long faces, look miserable, the more miserable you look the more saintly you are. Sometimes I really feel for poor Jesus. His followers down the ages have greatly changed the celebration mood, so sad, so dull.

He was not a dull man, he was not a sad man – he could not be. He was an enlightened person. He rejoiced in life, in the small things of life. He rejoiced in eating, drinking, friendship. He loved companionship, he loved the whole life.

But Christians down the ages have painted him as very sad. They have painted him always on the Cross, as if for thirty-three years he was always on the Cross. And my own understanding is that a man like Jesus will not die sad, even on the Cross. He must have laughed before he died. That's exactly what Jesus might have done, laughed. But Christians have tried their best to depict Jesus as sad.

Although the message of Christmas is rejoice and be merry, still there is sadness, because the whole of Christianity teaches you to be sad.

Rabindranath Tagore's most famous poem seeks "Where the mind is without fear, and the head is held high: where knowledge is free; where the world is not been broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls." You are going in the opposite direction.

The answer is not to turn inward but heed to the life and message of Christ. The Christians should scour their holy books for the best ideas and harness them for their wellbeing and progress.

So this Christmas, I hope you have fun and not be sad, with your family, friends and all else and spread the message of peace on earth and goodwill to all men. Let's stop all the fight and jealousy, first in our very own community between the weak and the strong or the rich and the poor or the old and the young as the world is so competitive.

The story of Jesus is such a poignant message to humanity of our freedom to choose a personal path – beyond the seeming 'power' of external circumstances. Love is the all-encompassing nature of human reality / consciousness and its source lies within each divine human presence. Look to the children for its pure example – no

past no future – simply an innocent openness to each and every moment. That is what the Babe Jesus stands for at Christmas time and what we should emulate. Bless the child within and all is well with us in this wondrous life.

I love the Christmas Spirit – being human is so mega magical. And these Christmas characters pop up once a year to remind us, without any armies or control structures to enforce their, the truth upon us.

I wish you a joyous Christmas celebration, a magical Christmas time and joy and fulfilment in the coming year – we are all one family when we make that choice. I pray we choose compassionately and wisely. Blessings to you and your loved ones.

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# Come Wonder Boy Come

**I**t was a cold winter Beijing night. Joseph Xi and Mary Li were expecting their first baby. The ultrasound test showed that it was to be a boy, a wonder boy. So they had decided to call him Ren-Zi (pronounced Zuh), Mandarin for "Son of Man", a title that another "wonder boy" had used 82 times to describe himself 2000 years ago. Ren-Zi was special. He had not been conceived naturally through sexual intercourse, but in a petra dish under the careful eye of Dr Jill Liu.

She was not just an expert at in vitro fertilization, but also in genetic engineering. So she had created an immaculate being, one that could not be infected by AIDS, or any ailment. This wonder child would never fall sick, nor age, and live forever.

The Chairman of the ruling Communist Party was not amused. The Party and its dialectic Marxism/ Maoism or any other Ism would be threatened by an ageless invincible eternal being. One of the members of the Party was Jack Ma, the owner of Alibaba, and the richest man in China. How could a Capitalist like Ma be a Communist? A little mouse under the Chairman's chair whispered, "In the same way that Catholic priests, bishops and popes take a vow of poverty, while living in huge palaces and driving around in luxury cars"!

The Chairman asked his Red Army (they were not very well read) to get the foetus aborted in a Peoples' Clin-

ic. He had heard of something called Incarnation – God becoming man. It seemed so stupid, because with modern Artificial Intelligence man was becoming God; if at all there was a God.

Yusuf Kumar and Mariam Rani were then in Bharat, also known as Hindustan. They too were expecting a special child. They went to seek divine blessings in the temple town of Ayodhya. They met several Brahmin priests, each showing them a different site that was purported to be the Janmabhoomi (place of divine birth) and the special Rasoi (the reigning queen's kitchen). Some Brahmins also pointed to a star shape carved in the ground. They said that this was the garb grah (sanctum sanctorum, or Holy of Holies) where Purushottam (the perfect Man) was born.

The priests asked the couple their gotra and caste. If Yusuf was a carpenter by profession then he belonged to the Other Backward Classes, so how could he claim to be of the kingly Dawood gharana? The kings were all kshatriyas. The Brahmins also found the couple's names foreign to them, and were horrified when they discovered that they were meat eaters. They warned them that in order to obtain moksha they would have to turn vegetarian. After shuddhikaran and ghar vapsi they were re-named as Yogendra Sharma and Meena Kumari.

Just then a horde of rampaging horse-

men in green turbans and wielding curved swords swooped down on the town, razed the temples and scattered the inhabitants into the nearby forests as vanavasis.

In central Africa the tall Masai warriors wielded huge spears. They were the lion hunters. Diminutive, but equally good hunters were the pygmies, with their poison arrows. In the course of history some pale faces appeared in their midst. They did not fight with spears or arrows, but with pipes that spewed fire and thunder. The tribesmen, as in Ayodhya, retreated into the jungles.

The pale faces had their own witch doctors called padres, who wore solar topees, khaki shorts and carried a box that spoke as though from the heavens. They convinced the Masais that they had the Messiah. In due course the tribesman got the good book and the pale faces got their good land.

In recent times a paleface John Allen Chau tried the same thing on the North Sentinel Island in the Bay of Bengal. He was not as lucky. The only land that he got on the island was the 6-foot plot where he was buried by the natives.

This narrative now moves from central Africa to central America. Jose (pronounced Hozey in Spanish) and Maria Lopez wanted to migrate from their impoverished country to the land of peanut butter and soybean oil, across the border from Mexico. They too were expecting their first child. They were told that if the child was born in the



by chhotebhai \*

land of peanut butter and soybean oil then it would automatically become a naturalized citizen of that land of plenty. Alas, at the border they bumped into the Trump Wall. They turned back dejected, because they were also told that the rules had changed. Migrants' children could not become citizens any more.

Some thousand miles north of the Mexican border was the Big Apple, New York, that housed the headquarters of the United Nations (UN). The General Assembly was deliberating on world peace. Ambassador after ambassador waxed eloquent. The world needed powerful leaders with 56 inch chests (women's size was discreetly not mentioned), strong armies and nuclear deterrents to maintain peace. The world needed an all-wonder combination of Superman, Batman and Spiderman to overcome insurmountable odds and destroy evil. Unfortunately, the only place that they could find such a person was in Hollywood, reeled into a can.

In exasperation the Secretary General left the podium and resumed his seat at the high table. Despite the harsh Atlantic winter he was wiping the sweat of his brow. Just then a lanky Mid-Easterner in long flowing robes, and equally flowing hair and beard, strode confidently up to the podium. From his cloth shoulder bag he took out a well thumbed book, placed it on the lectern and began to read:

*"The Spirit of the lord is on me,  
For he has anointed me  
To bring the good news to the afflicted.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to  
captives,  
Sight to the blind,  
To let the oppressed go free,  
To proclaim a year of favour from the  
Lord".*

The Secretary General banged his gavel furiously on the table. Who was this dishevelled intruder posing

as some kind of divine interventor, and disturbing the tranquillity of the assembly? The marshals were summoned. The intruder was unceremoniously bundled out onto the cold slippery streets of the Big Apple. The General Assembly resumed its inconclusive debate on peace that had begun after World War II in 1945!

The little mouse under the chair of the Secretary General sighed and said to him, "Sir, you have got it all wrong. The man you ejected/ rejected is the only one who can bring peace to the world, the peace that the world can't give. He is known as the Prince of Peace. Of him it was prophesised that he would convert swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks.

When he came along the people were looking for a strong man, a king with an army, a saviour, a miracle worker and a bread winner. He was all that and more, but his ways were not of this world. He did not call himself the Son of God. Instead he chose the mundane turn of phrase "Son of Man", "Bar-e-Nasa" in his native Aramaic dialect.

He asked people to forgive their enemies, to love one another, to care and share, to walk the narrow path and not accumulate wealth. He advocated empathy and compassion for the despised of society. Yes, he did heal people, not as a norm, but out of compassion, and forbade proclamation of his miracles.

He was not offering a "ready made, instant coffee" type of nirvana. He was born amid the cattle class, though the high class now worship him in gilded cathedrals. He himself learnt things the hard way, to "increase in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and with people" when he first visited the Temple in Jerusalem at the age of twelve. Like good rum, he was aged in wood, not in an oak barrel, but by working on the wood as a skilled car-

penter till the age of 30.

When he got the green signal from above while being immersed in the Jordan River, he began his three year public ministry. The religious and political establishment hated his forthrightness and uprightness; so they made him carry his own wood and nailed him to it. To justify their actions they staged a mock election that the carpenter lost to a nationalist zealot called Barabbas".

The Secretary General, a retired army General, was still wearing his hob-nailed boots, with which he squished the mouse into the ground; as he rushed off to attend a Christmas Party of roast turkey and plum pudding. In the corridor he bumped in to the ambassador from Bharat.

The Ambassador gave the Secretary General a huge hug. His premier back home was known as the Great Hugger. In his flamboyant north Indian style he said "Marry Xmas Jarnail Sahab, and Happi Bappi New Yaar". Just then he spotted the American Ambassador and was about to repeat the hugging. He stopped in the nick of time because it was a woman, the Indian origin Nick Haley. That could have been an embarrassing Me Too moment.

As the Ambassador stepped out of the building he met another Nick – Jonas, who had just married that Desi Girl. He hugged this Nick, and longed to do it to the Girl, but better sense prevailed.

The little mouse inside the building breathed its last. Its dying declaration was "Father forgive them all, they not what they do; nor did they recognize the Wonder Boy of the world". The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.

\* The writer is the former National President of the All India Catholic Union.

# Santa Claus & Christmas



by **Ivan Saldanha-Shet**

**CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR** - Mega world wide annual festivities, merry making and mirth are round the corner again. This season of Good will, Joy, Happiness are universal. The popular mascot of Christmas is the legendary figure of SANTA CLAUS - the warm portly red personality of Christmas!

Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, or simply Santa is a figure with legendary, origins, said to bring gifts to the homes. The modern figure of Santa Claus is derived from the Dutch figure of 'Sinter Klaas', whose name is an isolated form of 'Saint Nicholas'. 'Santa Claus', originally a 4th century Bishop of Turkey-St.Nicholas. He is known, historically, for his kindness to the poor and needy who used to walk the streets giving away gifts, money and eatables. St.Nicholas was Bishop of Myra in Lycia part of modern turkey, about 340 AD. Just a bit earlier, in 320AD, Pope Julius I, decreed the celebration by the

church on 25th December, which had no official date before that. Automatically St. Nicholas' portly figure in the red robes of a Bishop became associated with Christmas season. Later the Dutch took the St.Nicholas legend to the Americas. After the reformation, in early America, the modern image of St.Nicholas, or 'Sinter Klaas' in col-



loquial Dutch, became 'Santa Claus'. The popular image seen today got its shape with red outfit and white fur lined suit, huge belly, broad belt and so on depicted by cartoonist Thomas Nast in the US, during the civil war. Over the years it has spread and is recognised

universally.

Here in our own India, even little toddlers from all sections of the society know "Santa"! All of us were children at one time no doubt, some fail to out grow it within. The gifts that were left at our bedside early on Christmas morn left us with wonder and awe unlimited, until some years later the bubble burst. These days, 'Krismas Ajja' or 'Chrismis Thatha' are common in our areas! Backtracking a bit on the facts of SANTA CLAUS is worth while. Through the bright season of Christmas, between mid December and early in the New year-Carol singing, shopping in malls/stores, school parties, social gatherings, charity shows.....and so on is wide spread and one sees the presence of a 'Santa'.

The giant red figure of Santa, sack of gifts and goodies over the shoulder, bells and balloons, arriving in his sledge drawn by reindeer - heartily boozing Ho Ho Ho....is the call mingling with carols and cheers of the children and adults! Santa coming down the old chimney is too far fetched today, in the new context. The childhood scenario is etched on un-

forgettable memories which make the past, present and future of the modern civilized life. Many variations of



Santa are emerging constantly; the female gender is quite popular too in a broader sense! Sadly instances of extremists misusing, Santa's generous costume also exist. The nostalgia is limitless! Bright lights, grand fare are common at celebrations modern, with spreading wealth and multiplying unaccountable money bags. Shockingly it does not help reduce the scourge of poverty, home less street people, the exploited, rejected, orphans all over the world. Environment and ecology are endangered. Yes, C'mas has come to abound in Santa, C'mas trees, holiday trips, feasting, alcohol and such that are not the original focus; Christ that can raise humans to the level of angels has lost his place. Will suffering reduce and will there be a better world and a time of good will and hope to make the NEW YEAR 2019 and the future filled with PEACE and HARMONY for all - is a question that must be contemplated by all of us.

## 11 Innovative Ways to Decorate Your House This Christmas

Bring cheer to your house this Holiday season with our freshest Christmas decoration ideas. We've found 11 fresh new ideas that will have your space feeling contemporary and festive in no time.

**#1) Xmas 2018 Talking Tree –**  
A beautiful green talking tree for your loved ones. This comes with a free santa cap wishing happiness this season.

**#2. "Spirit Of Christmas" Crib -**  
As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, we pause to bless this Christmas manger scene.

**#3. LED Candles Set -**  
Its battery operated complete safe lightings for home. The advantage of these LED lights is that it gets less heated compared to the normal lights thus preventing damages and saves energy.

**#4. Pure White Marble Lantern with Gold Paint work -**  
A beautiful Christmas Gold Paint Embossed White Marble Lantern Studded with Kundans

**#5. Beautiful Hanging for decorations -**  
A beautiful Christmas wreath decorated with ribbons and decorative balls

**#6. Christmas Band -**  
As Christmas time calls for endless fun, frolic and fiesta, then make it large with this Set of 4 santa with artificial sitting with instruments.

**#7. Christmas 2018 Set Of 6 Christmas Decoration -**  
Beautiful set of 6 Christmas tree decor in combination of balls and bells



for your loved ones..

**#8. Red Roses, Chocolates & Champagne -**  
Makes a nice combos for gifting.

**#9. Merry Christmas Cushion Covers In Digital Print -**  
Set a mood of Christmas to entire mood

**#10. Xmas 2014 Santa Reindeer Hand Bands -**  
Surprise your loved ones with these fun hand Bands with reindeers and santas wishing Merry Christmas

**#11. Xmas 2014 Blue Flower Candle Stand -**  
A beautiful Metal Candle stand decorated with dried flowers for your loved ones.

# Doves --- A symbol of peace

The dove has long been viewed as a symbol of peace. Surely, the concept of peace is relevant to Christmas. After all, Jesus was born into the world to bring peace between God and mankind. Consider the words of the angels to the shepherds on the day Jesus Christ was born, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests." (Luke 2:14).

Though the good news of Jesus' birth was said to be for all the people, it seems that the offer of peace was more exclusive; it was for men on whom God's favour rested. There are a handful of distinct occasions in history when God made an offer of peace through specific men; special covenants were made with Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and interestingly, the dove played a symbolic role in each case.

In the days of Noah, the Bible records how all the people on the earth had corrupted their ways. God told Noah how He was going to send a flood to destroy everything on earth, but that He would establish a covenant with Noah to save him and his family through an ark.

After many days in the ark, the floodgates of the heavens were closed, and Noah sent out a dove to determine the state of the earth. After the dove's second journey, it returned to Noah, and in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf. Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. Surely, God was offering peace to mankind through Noah and his family by giving them a fresh



by Jubel D'Cruz

start on earth.

Several generations later, God chose to establish a special relationship of peace with Abraham and His descendants. Abraham would become the father of the Jewish people, a nation to whom God offered peace and relationship with Himself. In order to establish his covenant to give them the land of Canaan, God gave Abraham instructions for a ritual that involved a heifer, a goat, a ram, a pigeon and a dove. We will find later in history that each of these species were prescribed for sacrifice in the temple. These sacrifices were formally established many generations after Abraham through his descendant Moses.

Moses was born in Egypt at a time when the Jewish people were enslaved. God used Moses to lead his people out of Egypt and to establish a new covenant with them. As part of this particular covenant, God revealed his laws to the Jewish people. Yet, knowing that they could not perfectly obey His law, God set up a system of animal sacrifices. Sin separated the people from God, and the sacrifices were designed to make peace with Him. Essentially, the animals took upon themselves the consequence of sin, which is death.

Yet animal sacrifices would never



## Peace

be sufficient in establishing a permanent peace with God. The Book of Hebrews, Chapter 10, Verse 11 says, "Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." The law was meant to reveal the need for a priest, Jesus, who could offer once and for all a final and acceptable sacrifice for sin.

Again, several generations passed before Jesus, another descendant of Abraham, was born. Before beginning His ministry on earth, Jesus was baptized. The Bible tells us that as Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11, Matthew 3:17). How fitting that since the Holy Spirit is a sign of peace between God and man, and since it otherwise has no physical body, it would take on

the form of a dove.

Ultimately, Jesus gave up His life as a sacrifice for the sin of men. He made it possible for those who put their hope in Him to receive the same Holy Spirit that descended on Him, a sign and seal of peace between God and man.

Jesus paid the final sacrifice for sin by dying on the cross. He ushered in the final covenant of peace between God and man. When the angels spoke of the peace to men on whom God's favour rests, they spoke of Jesus Christ and all those who believe in Him.

Doves are common birds with a very symbolic history. Many religions and cultures celebrate doves as a symbol of peace. The Christian religion uses the dove as a symbol of God, while other cultures release doves into the sky at ceremonies, weddings, and other important events.

The cool thing about doves is that they live all over the world, with the exception of Antarctica. They are pretty birds and can live in desert areas, tropical forests, mountains, and woodlands.

Doves eat mainly insects, seeds, nuts, and fruits but in areas where people feed them, they will eat almost anything. Females tend to lay two eggs at a time, and it only takes a few weeks for them to hatch. In the wild, most doves live around 3-5 years but in captivity, they can live even longer.

May the images of doves during the Christmas season serve as a reminder of the Holy Spirit, who is the seal of peace with God. After all, true spiritual peace was the purpose for which Jesus Christ was born into the world.

# New Year Resolution: Be Not Afraid

**By Melvyn Brown**

We fold our hands in prayer for divine blessings to overcome the terrible events of the past year, and all the more because nothing much could be done on a global scale.

New Year resolutions have always been a part of the fabric of Christian life." Trust the Lord and sincerely worship him; think of all the tremendous things he has done for you." 1 Sam. 12:24.

We all have dreams, talk about hope and how tough things are. At the same time we try to prevent the worst from happening by trying to take control. There are no rules for complicated situations which might arise. But, there is evidence in how, by asserting oneself to face the full realism can make a perceptible change through resolutions.

Fear often keeps the faithful in doubt about their resolves. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me'. Mk. 5:36.

A simple new year resolution without the phobia, but cautiously taken can lead to a measure of success in solving a crisis. In Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, the lawyer Jaggers tells Pip, "Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence. There's no better rule".

It makes sense that even the most delicate and difficult situation one encounters can be a good new year resolution to bring about change, provided we are not afraid, or in doubt. A person can eloquently defend, protect, preserve and even prevent the forces of good from being demon-

ized. Resolve this new year to forgive an enemy, to clarify hope in trust, to prevent evil, promote goodwill, understand problems on the domestic front, make sharp distinctions between opposing values among friends, to abandon bad habits, and to be a better person.

It's worth noting that whatever resolution you make may not germinate instantly, it will first take root, sprout as some beans do after gentle watering and fearless attention to growth. The grim reality is that making a resolution is nerve-shattering and the fear of failing even worse. No one says it will be easy. It was not meant to be.

In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul said, "For the magistrate does not frighten people who are doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So, if you don't want to be afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well." Rom.13:3.

Clarify your resolution and do not be afraid. Be positive and all will go well, this is the truth. Happy New Year.



# THE CHRISTMAS BOMB

**A Christmas Short Story**

The dark winter sky threw a blanket of cold swirling winds across the countryside. Naked trees and scattered huts lay waste upon acres of lonely earth. The Coalfield Express rushed ahead as someone in the other compartment played the song, Back home for the holidays, on his mobile.

It was sheer coincidence that the song connected to his own coming home at Christmas, and to his beloved Diana, who would soon be his wife. Robert heaved a sigh of happiness.

He had been away for three years, leaving his business in the hands of his fiancée. Robert had put in a lot of work on his project to complete a thesis for the Phd. The Social and Domestic Life of Coalminers, was his topic.

After the overnight journey the train slowly chugged into the crowded station at Sealdah, Calcutta. A sea of human heads rolled like waves as passengers streamed out on the platform while others stood firm in positions to board the empty train.

Robert would be in time for the yuletide festival just a few days away.

Christmas decorations hung scattered across the station creating a heart-warming feeling. The Spirit of Christmas in the city was well known the world over and tourists flooded the pathways of joy. Christmas in Calcutta was special for its awesome cakes, wine, gaily decorated restaurants, music, twilight dinners, family get-togethers and the Christmas Midnight services.

Shovelling a path through the crowds, Robert suddenly caught a glimpse of Diana, her family waving to draw his attention. He plowed his way towards



BY MELVYN BROWN



them. It was special moment to rejoice.

Diana missed him and her face lit up on seeing Robert. She had prayed for him, spent long hours in writing letters and planning all sorts of things. She moved up to him and gripped his arm on the way home, chatting away.

The days flew by in the bat-of-an-eye. It had been a hectic time for them: shopping in the New Market and in city malls, buying a beautiful 'live' Christmas tree, decorations, a grand marble-dust Crib set; cakes from Nahoum, Saldanha for his special plum cake and Kathleen's for children's delights.

The eve of Christmas had arrived and preparations were being made for the right wine, the roast turkey, gifts to adorn the Christmas tree, the mistletoe above the door...

Getting ready for Midnight Mass at Christ the King church was one to long remember. The family sat in the fifth row pew facing the high altar. They sat in silence, prayer and thanksgiving. Robert took his place at the entrance of the pew with Diana beside him.

A young woman came up the aisle and requested Robert to move up a little. She carried a colorful airline bag, placed it next to Robert and smiled as if to say, thank you. The bell rang overhead. The entrance hymn began. Everyone in the congregation stood up as the altar servers and the parish

priest followed.

The woman who sat beside Robert had suddenly left and the airline bag was not taken. Suddenly, someone in the back row whispered, it could be a bomb.

"Don't pick up the bag, Robert," said Diana and almost fainted.

When Mass was over and after the final hymn had been sung, the people moved out of the church wishing each other a happy Christmas.

Diana's father informed the parish priest and he sent for the police and the bomb-squad. The team of policemen arrived within moments and threw a cordon around the bag. Then the bomb-squad took over and opened the airline bag.

A Christmas musical card was inside the bag along with a note and a cheque of ten thousand rupees from the Coalminers Association. The note read: "Thank you Robert friend we were happy to know that someone should think of us, our hard life and daily struggle. This is a small Christmas gift from all of us for your wedding. Happy Christmas."

Tears flooded Diana's eyes as Robert did not know what to say."

"Let us thank God, " said the parish priest, "it was not a bomb".

## New Year is a time to start a new life

This is not a fairy tale and it never will be a fairy tale as beautiful as our memories of the last year, or as beautiful as our dreams and hopes for the year that is about to begin.

This is the time to bring all the fairy tales to life --- frogs who became princes, paupers who became wealthy, greedy and jealous people who unexpectedly became generous and kind, wicked men punished and good men rewarded....The list is endless! It's time to look back at the past year, decide what went well, what didn't and what you would like to change.

New Year is a time to start a new life. It is a new beginning. It is a time to celebrate the start of something new. It is a time to make new promises, some to be broken, and some to be kept. It is also a time to look ahead and try to change things for the better. It is also a time to look behind and see what we may have done wrong, and how to change it. It is also a time to start new friendships and a time to ask for forgiveness from your enemies.

Every year is a new blessing for us from God and we need to thank Him for the same. A New Year is a blossom in our life and it is worth celebrating the day. It is a simple and known fact that January 1 is fabulously celebrated as the greatest and most important day all across the world. This day is considered as a day filled with great fun and enthusiasm. New Year is a special day for each person because it is time for welcoming another year, enjoying with family and friends, having fun and taking resolutions for the upcoming year.

New Year is a joyous time of the year because we feel like we get to start all over again. On New Year's Day, people are happy, laughing, giggling and sharing about the events of the past year and those before.



by Jubel D'Cruz

## New Year is a special day for all people

New Year is a special day for people, as this day is the beginning of the New Year and they welcome the upcoming year in their own way. People start the preparations for the New Year celebrations many days in advance. They buy new clothes, gifts and many other new things from the market. Shops and malls are full of people on these days. On the midnight of December 31st, and on the morning of January 1st, there is a celebration of New Year in India and all over the world. After the Christmas celebrations, people wait for the 31st night, that is, the day when we recall all the good and bad memories of whole year and say goodbye to the going year and welcoming the New Year. People celebrate this day with music and dance. Children are very happy on New Year's Day as they get lots of gifts and good food to enjoy the New Year party.

Different communities celebrate their New Year on different days of the year according to their calendar. But celebrating New Year on January 1 is a festival for all communities.

Here are some facts about the New Year:

- \* The earliest known New Year celebrations were in Mesopotamia and date back to 2000 B.C.
- \* The Gregorian calendar, which marks January 1st as the New Year, is adopted by the Roman Catholic Church.
- \* The Chinese New Year is celebrated the second full moon day after the winter solstice.
- \* The Jewish New Year is called Rosh Hashanah. Apples and Honey are the traditionally eaten.
- \* In ancient Rome, the New Year began on March 1st.



# History and Meaning behind Christmas Symbolism in decorations

Every year we make Christmas DECORATIONS. Year after year, we PULL OUT the boxes, PUT UP the decorations, then TAKE them DOWN, and store them away for NEXT YEAR. If you're going to go through all that EFFORT every year, it's going to be a LOT more MEANINGFUL if you understand the HISTORY and the SYMBOLISM behind those decorations.

*Let's EXPLORE them today & share this with our kids too....*

## The Colors Red and Green:

RED symbolizes the BLOOD of Christ, offered in sacrifice for our sins. GREEN is the color of LIFE.

EVERGREENS in the middle of winter give us HOPE that new life will come even after the cold of winter. To a world that was DEAD to sin, Jesus Christ brings NEW LIFE.

## Wreaths:

The CIRCLE symbolizes the ETERNAL nature of God. You trace the LINE of a circle, and it NEVER ENDS. Jesus Christ is the ETERNAL Son of God, without beginning and without end.

## Christmas Tree:

This custom comes from Germany. St. Boniface was a Catholic archbishop in Germany in the 8th century. He helped to replace PAGAN practices with CHRISTIAN faith. There was a huge OAK TREE at Geismar, that was considered SACRED by the pagans. It was dedicated to the god Thor. In the year 723 AD, Boniface CHALLENGED that pagan practice, in the presence of HOSTILE tribesmen, and CUT DOWN the oak tree and pointed to a little FIR tree growing next to it, and said: "This



humble tree's wood is used to build your homes: let CHRIST be at the center of your households. Its leaves remain evergreen in the darkest days: let CHRIST be your constant light. Its branches reach out to embrace and its top points to heaven: let CHRIST be your Comfort and Guide."

So when you see a Christmas tree, let its EVERGREEN foliage remind you that the love of God NEVER DIES, and let its SHAPE remind you that HEAVEN is your ultimate goal.

## Ornaments on the Tree:

Dec. 24 used to be observed on the Church calendar as the Feast of Adam and Eve. In the Middle Ages, there were religious plays called "Mystery plays". They told story of Creation and Adam and Eve. A PROP for those plays was a Tree of Paradise: FIR tree with

RED APPLES on it. These EVOLVED into our tree ornaments.

## Star:

It reminds us of the star that guided the Wise Men to where Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

## Poinsettia Flowers:

These are native to Mexico and Central America, and they bloom in the short days of winter. The shape of the bloom is like the STAR of Bethlehem. The colors are the traditional Christmas red and green. Flores de Noche Buena – Flowers of the Holy Night: In the Mexican Christmas tradition, a YOUNG GIRL wished to bring a PRESENT to baby Jesus, but had no MONEY. The girl, Pepita, could only pick WEEDS along the road as she went to visit the Christ child. But as she neared the ALTAR in the church to present her

Christmas gift, the simple weeds suddenly TRANSFORMED into the vibrant, beautiful Flores de Noche Buena.

### Candy Canes:

Their shape is that of a SHEPHERD'S staff: to guide the sheep. This reminds us of the shepherds who were the first WITNESSES of the birth of Christ. Also: Christ is our Good Shepherd. The prophet Micah says in today's First Reading: "He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock."

### COLORS of the Candy Cane:

WHITE: symbolizes the Virgin birth and the purity of Christ, RED: symbolizes the blood of Christ, offered in sacrifice for our sins. STRIPES: remind us of the marks from his SCOURGING in his Passion, like it says in Isaiah 53 and I Peter 2, "By his STRIPES we are healed."

### Christmas Holly:

Prickly, pointed LEAVES: are a reminder of Jesus' Crown of Thorns Red BERRIES: a reminder of the drops of his BLOOD shed in SACRIFICE for the sins of humanity. The Letter to the Hebrews in today's Second Reading says: "We have been consecrated through the OFFERING of the BODY of Jesus Christ once for all."

### Candles:

Symbolize the fact that Christ is the LIGHT of the World. He DISPELS the DARKNESS of sin.



try, and were subject to instant EXECUTION if they were FOUND. Priests traveled in SECRET, and celebrated the Mass in HOMES at night. At Christmas time, Irish Catholic families would leave their DOOR unlocked and CANDLES in the windows, to signal to the PRIEST that he could come and stay and pray with them.

The English SOLDIERS would ASK about the candles. The Irish people would reply: "They are to let Mary and Joseph know that they can come to stay here at our house." The soldiers would say, "SILLY Catholics!"

### Nativity Scene:

It was invented by St. FRANCIS of Assisi for Midnight Mass in the year 1223, in the little town of Greccio, Italy. They used live ANIMALS, and local PEOPLE took the roles of the people in the Gospel event. It was a very CREATIVE way to MEDITATE on the mystery of Christmas.

So, THIS WEEK, as you sit and look at Christmas decorations, PONDER the MEANING and the HISTORY of all those beautiful CHRISTIAN customs. They remind us of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who HUMBLED himself to be born a POOR HUMAN BEING like us, and to LIVE AMONG US, in order to show us what God is REALLY LIKE, by POURING OUT his life for us, WORLD SHOULD KNOW THE TRUE REASON FOR CHRISTMAS





# Christmas in India

**C**ompared to other religious festivals, Christmas is quite a small festival in India, due to the number of people who are Christians (about 2.3%) compared to people who belong to other religions. Having said this, the population of India is over 1 Billion, so there are over 25 million Christians in India!

One of the largest Indian Christian Communities in a city is in Mumbai. A lot of the Christians in Mumbai (previously known as Bombay) are Roman Catholics. In India's smallest state, Goa which is on the west of India, about 26% of people are Christians. Many of the Christians in Mumbai came from or have roots in Goa. The states of Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram (all on the very east of India) have high populations of Christians as well.

Midnight mass is a very important service for Christians in India, especially Catholics. The whole family will walk to the mass and this will be followed by a massive feast of different delicacies, (mostly curries) and the giving and receiving of presents. Churches in India are decorated with Poinsettia flowers and candles for the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass service.

Instead of having traditional Christmas

Trees, a banana or mango tree is decorated (or whatever tree people can find to decorate!). Sometimes people use mango leaves to decorate their homes.

In Southern India, Christians often put small oil burning clay lamps on the flat roofs of their homes to show their neighbors that Jesus is the light of the world.

Christians in Goa love to celebrate Christmas! Goa has lots of 'western' customs as part of their Christmas as Goa has historical connections with Portugal. Most Christians in Goa are Catholics. People like to go carol singing around their neighbors for about a week before Christmas. Christmas Trees are also very popular as is a 'traditional' rich fruit Christmas Cake! Lots of local sweets are also eaten at Christmas in Goa. Favourite sweets include neureos (small pastries which are stuffed with dry fruit and coconut and fried) and dodol (like toffee that has coconut and cashew in it). These are other sweets are often part of 'consuada' when people make sweets before Christmas and give them to their friends and neighbors. Most Christian families also have a nativity scene with clay figures in it.

On Christmas Eve, Christians in Goa hang out giant paper lanterns, in the shape of stars, between the houses

so that the stars float above you as you walk down the road. The main Christmas meal is also eaten on Christmas Eve and is also 'western' with roast turkey or chicken being popular. After the meal, Christians head to Church for a Midnight mass service. After the service the church bells ring to announce that Christmas Day has arrived. Many Christians in Goa also celebrate Epiphany and remember the Wise Men visiting Jesus.

Christians in Mumbai use many Christmas traditions from Goa including the star lanterns and manger scenes (people like to make sure they have the best the nativity scene!).

In north-west India, the tribal Christians of the Bhil folk, go out night after night for a week at Christmas to sing their own carols the whole night through. They go to surrounding villages singing to people and telling the Christmas story.

In South West India, in the state of Kerala Were, 22% of the state's 33 Million population are Christians and Christmas is an important festival. Traditional Catholics fast don't eat from 1st to 24th of December - until the midnight service. Every house will be decorated with a Christmas star. During the start of the Christmas season, almost all the stationary shops will be filled with new and variety Christmas stars. People make cribs in their homes and Churches.

In India, Father Christmas or Santa Claus delivers presents to children from a horse and cart. He's known as 'Christmas Baba' in Hindi, 'Baba Christmas' in Urdu (both of those mean Father Christmas); 'Christmas Thaathaa' in Tamil and 'Christmas Thatha' in Telugu (both of those mean Christmas old man); and 'Natal Bua' (Christmas Elder Man) in Marathi. In Kerala state, he's known as 'Christmas Papa'.

# Christmas Is A Gift To Be Taken Seriously



**By Melvyn Brown**

Christmas is an essential gift from God given freely and not to be taken for granted. Christmas brings God into your life: when you go shopping, when you, when you admire decorations, the holiday you plan, clothes you will wear, presents for family should all be used sensitively – for He is always with you at yuletide and throughout your life.

Because you are a baptized Christian, you should not take the Lord and his love for you lightly. During the season of advent every year, God's presence is revealed in the environment of your life – to remind you of his only Son Jesus, your hope, redeemer and salvation. He was sent to teach us the holiness of reconciliation and fraternity.

First, at this season, we celebrate the coming of the Messiah as a

babe. Meditate on the miracles of the first Christmas, when it happened two thousand years ago. Think of the holy family as they journeyed to Bethlehem. The search for shelter as Mary was with child, experiencing the pain and discomfort before the birth of Jesus. Imagine the stress and tension Joseph went through.

When alone, spend a few minutes to think of the night when Christ came into the world: the lone star guiding three kings of the East to the stable where Jesus was born. Out in the fields angels sang and shepherds were amazed to hear the choir of angelic voices.

Let celebrations erupt in joy – the Savior is with us.

Think of the prophesies given by mystics, saints, hermits and prophets of the Old Covenant thousands

of years ago having been fulfilled.

Let us take Christmas more seriously. Prepare for the approaching moment when the presence of God in Christ Jesus becomes the Ark of the Covenant; when the great and historic hour in the church turns an event of divine significance in Roman Catholic history put in its Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The gift of Christ, his passion and sacrifice is virtually a memorial to share each year as a dramatic and spiritual time in our mundane lives. For Jesus Christ it was the journey to be, "the way, the truth and the life".(Jn.14:6). For humanity it is a pilgrimage of faith, trust and hope. Christmas must be taken seriously without doubt and distractions.

Christmas is God's gift to suffering humanity. It can lead on to greater things if you give the Lord what is due to him. Happy Christmas.

# ARE WE READY FOR DESIGNER BABIES MADE TO OUR CHOICE?

by Eric D'Sa

**W**ith the era of planned small families and late age marriages dawning on us, when a couple decide to have a child and the woman conceives, there is lot of joy but at the same time an anxiety about the health of the embryo slowly growing in the woman's womb. The anxiety increases in a big measure, when the family history indicates that there is a good chance of the the family inherited defects may be inherited by the unborn child. Until recently science had advanced to the extent that the growing embryo could be checked, to find if the suspected defect had been inherited by the embryo and if so take the necessary actions, some considered this improper and unethical.

A Chinese scientist from a university in Shenzhen now claims he has succeeded in creating the world's first genetically edited babies. He told the Associated Press that twin girls were born earlier this month, after he edited their embryos using CRISPR technology to remove the CCR5 gene, which plays a critical role in enabling many forms of the HIV virus to infect cells. Whether the claims are true or false, one thing is clear: We are entering an era of designer babies. Scientists will soon be able to edit human embryos with the aim of eliminating debilitating disease, selecting physical traits such as skin and eye color, or even adding extra intelligence. However our understanding of the effects of the technology is in its infancy.

So what is Gene editing? It is a technique through which genes can be de-

leted or replaced from ones genome. To make it simple it is like removing an unwanted word from a sentence completely or replacing it with another related or unrelated word, but which will still give a meaningful sentence. Eg. Sunday's are GOOD days for work to Sunday's are BAD days for work. These days the most widely used technique for gene editing is called CHISPR, which is an adoption of methods that bacteria use to kill invading viruses.

## YOU THE CITIZENS DECIDE:

The technology is CRISPR: clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats. Discovered by scientists only a few years ago, CRISPRs are elements of an ancient system that protects bacteria and other single-celled organisms from viruses, acquiring immunity to them by incorporating genetic elements from the virus invaders. CRISPRs evolved over millions of years to trim pieces of genetic information from one genome and insert it into another. And this bacterial antiviral defense serves as an astonishingly cheap, simple, elegant way to quickly edit the DNA of any organism in the lab.

Until recently, experimenting with DNA required sophisticated labs, years of experience, and millions of dollars. The use of CRISPRs has changed all that. CRISPRs work by using an enzyme — Cas9 — that homes in on a specified location in a strand of DNA. The process then edits the DNA to ei-

ther remove unwanted sequences or insert payload sequences. CRISPRs use an RNA molecule as a guide to the DNA target. To set up a CRISPR editing capability, a lab only needs to order an RNA fragment and purchase off-the-shelf chemicals and enzymes, costing only a few dollars.

Because CRISPR is cheap and easy to use, it has both revolutionized and democratized genetic research. Thousands of labs all over the world are experimenting with CRISPR-based editing projects. There are few regulations worldwide, even in the United States, largely because regulators don't understand what has become possible. China has taken the lead because it puts scientific progress ahead of all concerns. It has made the most astonishing breakthroughs.

In 2014, Chinese scientists announced they had successfully produced monkeys that had been genetically modified at the embryonic stage. In April 2015, another group of researchers in China published a paper detailing the first ever effort to edit the genes of a human embryo. The attempt failed, but it shocked the world: this wasn't supposed to happen so soon. And then, in April 2016, yet another group of Chinese researchers reported it had succeeded in modifying the genome of a human embryo in an effort to make it resistant to HIV infection.

The intentions may be good, but this has transgressed a serious ethical boundary. We know too little to predict the broader effects of altering or disabling a gene. In the 1960s, we imagined rather naively that as time went by, we would understand with increasing precision the role of each gene in making us what we are. The foundation of

genetics for decades, once biology's Central Dogma, was the hypothesis that each gene codes for a single protein. Knowing the correspondences, we would have tools useful not only for research but also for curing and preventing disease with a genetic basis and perhaps for augmenting human evolution.

The one-gene-one-protein Central Dogma, though it continues to pervade our common beliefs about genetics, underwent conversion when scientists realized many proteins comprise several polypeptides, each of which was coded for by a gene. The Dogma therefore became one gene, one polypeptide. But what sounded the entire Dogma's death knell was the discovery in the early 1970s that a single gene can code for more than one protein. The discovery that the human genome contains only about 30,000 genes to code for some 90,000 proteins brought

that home; but what makes our understanding appear spectacularly inadequate is the discovery in 2000 that a single gene can potentially code for tens of thousands of proteins.

In a nutshell, we don't know the limits of the new technologies, can't guess what lifetime effects a single gene alteration will have on a single individual, and have no idea what effects alteration of genes in sperm or ova or a fetus will have on future generations. For these reasons, we have no knowledge of whether a particular modification of the human germline will be ultimately catastrophic, and no basis for considering that tampering with heritable genes can be humane or ethical. With an awareness of our ignorance in this area, the 2015 announcement of genetic modification of a human embryo led to global debate, and a handful of governments temporarily banned gene editing of live human embryos

as well as the genetic modifications of the human germline (the DNA that will create future generations) for imparting beneficial traits such as height or intelligence

But in February 2017, an advisory body of National Acadamy of Sciences announced its support for using CRISPR to edit the genes of embryos to remove DNA sequences that cause serious heritable diseases. And the Chinese are clearly proceeding with experimentation too, as the announcement by Shenzhen researchers showed. The reality is that we have arrived at a Rubicon. Humans are on the verge of finally being able to modify their own evolution. The question is that you the Citizens will have to decide, can we use this newfound superpower in a responsible way that will benefit the planet and its people — or will this be a race for scientific glory and profit or doom?

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# 40 Christmas Decorating Ideas That Will Bring Joy To Your Home



Christmas is right around the corner and with it come trees and ribbons and ornaments and lights and ... oh goodness, what are you supposed to do with it all? Don't let stress over Christmas decorating make you lose the Christmas spirit. Here are 40 Christmas decorating ideas that will bring joy to your home this holiday season.

## 1. Incorporate lanterns into your design.

You can use put candles inside or (as shown below) fill them with ornaments and lights for extra holiday spirit.

## 2. Embrace different color schemes.

Holiday decorating isn't restricted to just red and green. Try out different color schemes that are still festive but refreshingly unique.

## 3. Make a banner for your fireplace.

You can use paper or fabric, but making a simple banner to hang over your mantel adds a special homemade

touch.

## 4. Add natural elements to your design.

Incorporating pine cones and other rustic elements into holiday décor make for a homey, wholesome feeling.

## 5. Get crafty with the kids.

The holidays are about family and what better way to emphasize that than having your little ones help out with decorating? This reindeer craft is an adorable example.

## 6. Make an ornament wall.

Talk about a conversation piece! And all you need is ribbon, ornaments, and a staple gun. It's a bit time-consuming, but the result is a contemporary holiday piece.

## 7. Use old Christmas cards.

Not sure what to do with all of those old Christmas cards? Make yourself an adorable holiday collage.

## 8. Use pictures instead of name tags on your presents.

This is a small, personal addition that will make your presents a design element and touch your loved ones this holiday season.

## 9. Fill your apothecary jars with Christmas goodies.

A simple and affordable way to put a "holiday spin" on items that are already sitting around your home.

## 10. Put your stockings in different places.

For Christmas dinner, you can put your family members' stockings on their respective chairs. Or, consider putting them on your entryway staircase. The options are endless!

## 11. Try an alternative Christmas tree.

If you are in a smaller space, allergic to pine, or just want to try something different, consider a modern take (like this driftwood option) on your holiday tree.

## 12. Add subtle holiday elements that match your room's preexisting color scheme.

For a more understated (but still festive) design, use colors already found in your space.

## 13. Make ornaments from your favorite holiday book or sheet music.

Use papier-mâché and a little bit of glitter to create a truly unique ornament for your tree.



#### **14. Use mason jars for a rustic holiday theme.**

Mason jars are an adorable and cheap addition to your design. You can fill the bottom with Epsom salt to look like snow, like in this example.

#### **15. Make your fridge a snowman.**

Super easy and super cute—this little addition will make both kids and adults smile.

#### **16. Use Christmas music as design inspiration.**

What are the holidays without some Christmas carols? If you are a musically-inclined family, use your instruments to create a beautiful metallic mantel display.

#### **17. Turn your stockings into silverware holders.**

You can either knit some up on your own or purchase pre-made mini ones. Either way, you have a creative addition to your Christmas table.

#### **18. Fill your wreath with pine cones.**

Green wreaths aren't the only way to go. Shake things up (in a good way!)

by adding more natural elements, like pine cones and berries, into your wreath.

#### **19. Put your candy canes to use!**

The candy cane has become an instantly recognizable symbol of Christmastime. Hang them above your windows for a quirky, sweet holiday design.

#### **20. Use extra ornaments for a modern take on wreaths.**

You can use whatever color or size of ornaments match your design.

#### **21. Make your own Advent wreath.**

While there is nothing wrong with the traditional design, incorporating your personal design to the wreath can make it extra special. This one made from pottery candle holders is lovely.

#### **22. Find inspiration from your location.**

Whether you are from the outback of Australia or the beaches of Florida, use your surroundings in your design. For example, this beautiful tree was inspired by the coast.

#### **23. Scatter “presents” around your home.**

A super easy and cost-friendly option to spread a little Christmas cheer. You can use leftover boxes from your Christmas shopping.

#### **24. Decorate white ornaments as “snowmen” and use as a cute centerpiece.**

Another easy craft that your kids will also enjoy.

#### **25. Birch wood is a beautiful design element.**

Touches of birch wood, like in this example, bring a woodsy, cabin-like feel to your Christmas decorations. Don't you just want to curl up around the fireplace?

#### **26. Pair vibrant wreaths with graphic pieces for a contemporary mantel.**

Limit your color scheme to two or three colors and choose elements with clean lines to create a truly unique holiday display.

#### **27. Make a “hot cocoa bar.”**

There's nothing like a delicious, warm cup of hot chocolate around Christmastime. Find inspiration from this absolutely beautiful setup.

#### **28. If you have shutters, fill the slits with garland.**

Use the architectural elements of your home to your decorating advantage.

#### **29. Create a life-size, interactive Christmas calendar.**

As much as I like those pop-out chocolate cardboard calendars, there's something fun about this display. Fill each bag with a special Christmas

treat—your kids will love it!

### **30. Use your holiday cards to make a Christmas tree.**

Another easy way to display this year's Christmas cards. All you have to do is tape them to the wall!

### **31. Turn pine cones into mini trees.**

Stick a star on top and place the pine cone into candle holders to create a lovely table centerpiece.

### **32. Decorate your piano.**

Drape some garland over the top of your piano or set up a Christmas village display and you have a Christmas-carol-ready instrument!

### **33. Hang ornaments from your windows with matching ribbons.**

A simple way to add a bit of holiday whimsy to your window treatments.

### **34. Add holiday-inspired pillows to your home's seating areas.**

Whip up a few slipcovers to throw on pillows for your couches, chairs, etc. You can even add some to your mudroom like in the adorable example below!

### **35. Don't forget to decorate the inside of your front door!**

Many people put garland around the outside, but why not add a bit of zest

to the inside as well? Now you can remind people of the holiday spirit as they come and go!

### **36. Surprise your guests with a decorated headboard.**

Put your visitors in the Christmas mood by adding a bit of garland or Christmas lights to the headboard. You can even throw on a personalized stocking to make them feel right at home.

### **37. Bring Christmas to the kitchen.**

I don't know about your family, but mine spends a lot of time in the kitchen during the holidays. Buy a small Christmas tree for your kitchen island or hang wreaths from your cabinets.

### **38. There is such a thing as elegant cut-out snowflakes.**

Cutting out snowflakes is no longer just for kids. Dangling a few large snowflakes above your table can be a chic and beautiful option.

### **39. Use your leftover wrapping paper to create a wreath.**

Follow the instructions at the source to create a truly unique and striking holiday piece.

### **40. Put presents in your unused fireplace.**

Even if you won't be roasting chestnuts over an open fire, it doesn't mean the space has to be neglected. Place some wrapped boxes (or suitcases, like in the picture) for a wonderfully festive display.



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Prop. B. D'Souza

# HARK! THE YOU TUBE VOICE IS CALLING



*To renew our Liturgies  
Bidding us to firm repentance  
Since the Kingdom is now near.  
Oh that warning cry obey  
Now prepare for God a way  
Ev'ry valley may He fill  
Level ev'ry mount and hill*

The renewal of Sacred music used in the liturgy was carefully considered by the 2nd Vatican Council. It explained the role of music in divine services and hoped that pastors, musicians and the faithful would gladly accept its norms and put them into practice to attain the true purpose of sacred music "which is the glory of God and the sanctification of his people. Good music gives the Liturgy a more noble form and our prayer is expressed in a more attractive way.

You Tube has given us a most effective platform to display good new hymns for liturgical services from Baptism to Funerals. The most important chants are those which people quite often skip: the Psalms! Then there are chants for the Great Seasons of Lent-Easter, Advent-Parousia-Christmas, not to forget music for Feasts and special occasions which give

these events their proper tone and colour.

Our Diocesan Catholic Communication Centre has welcomed our Team and well chosen cantors to their studio to record hymns to be uploaded on You Tube. We are now looking for suitable singers: men, women and children to make video recordings so that people worldwide may learn these chants and use them at all liturgical services. There is also much to be learnt by cantors about choice of hymns; while instrumentalists need to grow in the art of devout accompaniments and replace loud music with soul touching interludes.

**ONE DAY AT A TIME:** We shall start with **AUDITIONS FOR SINGERS:** soloists [such as cantors and hymn

leaders] as well as duets, trios, quartets that can sing in 2, 3 & 4 part harmony. These would have to appear for the audition with any songs/hymns they know as we will judge pitching, blending and expression. If you are not able to read music you may resort to smart phones to learn your part. Nobody will be called for auditions before the end of the Christmas Season. However volunteers MUST apply right away, so that we may tabulate their applications. So fill in and send the form below to [anicetonaz@gmail.com](mailto:anicetonaz@gmail.com) [You may Xerox this page if copies are needed for any good singers u know] MUST reach us with the Wise Men by Epiphany 6 Jan A AUDITION FORM FOR PERFORMANCE ON U-TUBE

Your name on the dots. Cell phone below the dots.

Solo...1.....

Duet 1.....2.....

Trio 1.....2.....3.....

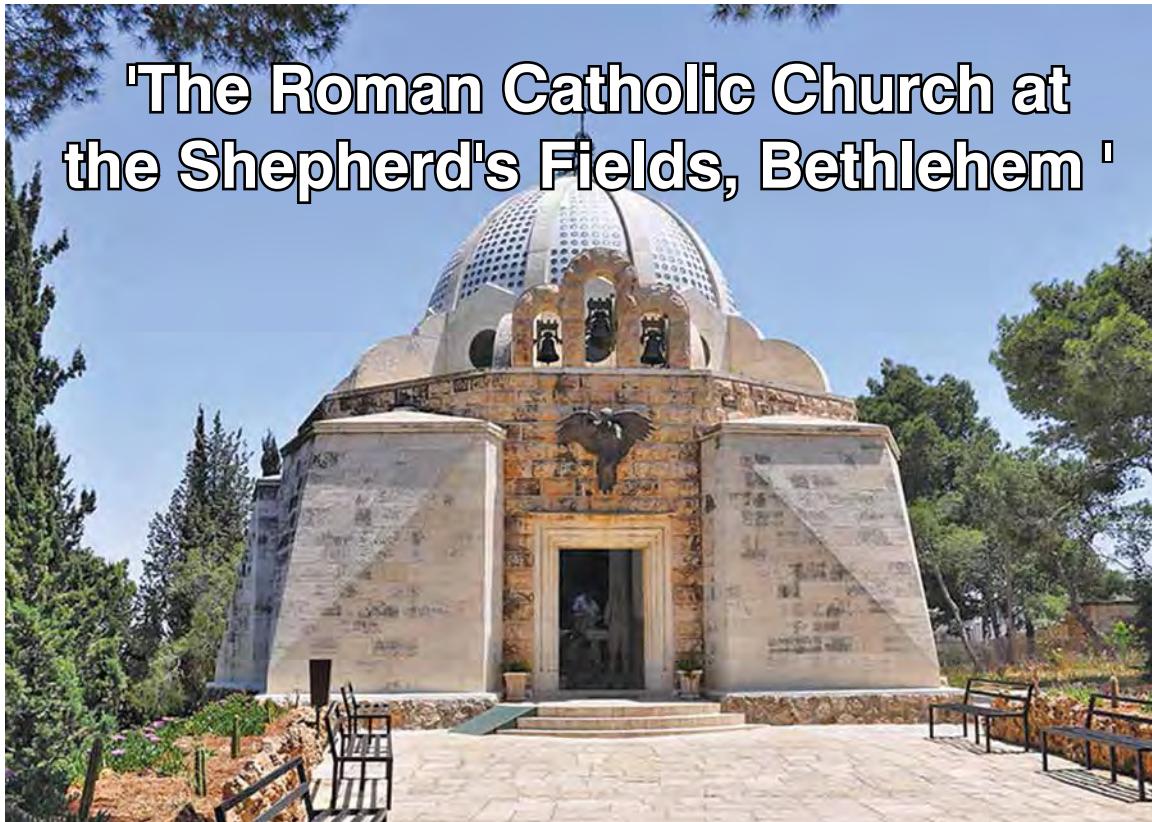
Quartet 4 .....

Kindly circle days of the week convenient for you

Sun	Mo	Tu	Wd	Th	Fri	Sat
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—**Father Aniceto Nazareth**

# 'The Roman Catholic Church at the Shepherd's Fields, Bethlehem '



**BY Peter Castellino**

A church existed when St Helen lived and it was dedicated to angels who announced Jesus's birth to the shepherds and in the first century a school was built followed by a church in a grotto and in 1950 architect Berluzzi consecrated and dedicated it to Our Lady of Fatima and St Theresa of Lisieux.

The five parts of this church has three pointed arches and the upper part of the facade is crowned by slender little arches running along the side walls.

A nave lies inside with two aisles and two rows of columns each and the column shafts are pale red stone of the country and look a little squat and to make them less massive the architect placed various drums of decreasing height..

The very narrow pointed arches make the inside more longer and the main alter is big when measured

and it is a real gavel and below it lies a Palestinian sculpture but it looks miniature like a carved stone and the frontal alter has 15 panels scenes from the Annunciation to the arrival of the Holy Family in Egypt and in the same level of the tabernacle of the Evangelists and in the upper part the 12 apostles surround the image of Christ which was carried out by Yassa Yanier of Bethlehem and Abdullah Haron of Beit Sahour where the church lies in the middle of the Boaz fields -traditionally located at Sugar-il - Ghanam - the field of the shepherds.

The excavations carried out by Fr Vigil Carbo o fm in 1952v were more exhaustive than the previous ones - C Guarmani of 1859.

Theories of human existence date back to Herodus and Roman times and remanants of very ancient oil presses under the monasteries show that the place was inhabited when Jesus was born in Bethlehem

and Fr Corbo gathered enough evidence to prove that a community lived there.

At Sugar il Ghanum exist remnants of guard tower incorporated into the Franciscan hospice

The Targamim localized /made the tower east of Bethlehem specifying that the Messiah would be announced there and the Talmudic tradition pointed to the same region and the Christian tradition after our Lord's birth and accepted and maintained the location.

St Jerome sees the tower at almost one thousand Roman feet from Bethlehem and adds in that place the Angels had announced to shepherds the birth of the Redeemer.

What remains of the farming settlement and the guard tower explains very well an expression of Luke's original Greek text.

Thus we see the importance of the Roman Catholic Church at the Shepherd's Fields , Bethlehem.

# Challenges Of The Digital Age

– Tips for Parents & Teachers  
By Dr George Kaitholil SSP

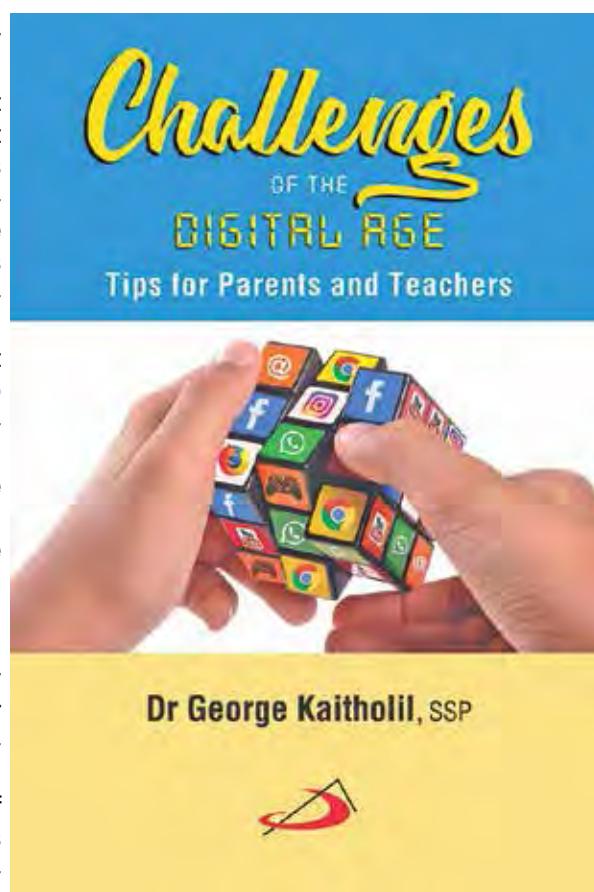
Reviewed by  
**Ladislaus Louis D'Souza**

BETTER YOURSELF BOOKS / ISBN  
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We are in the Cyber age when the world is witnessing an incredibly fast revolution on the communications front, swift progress of digital technology constantly bringing about a rapid evolution with regard to thought pattern as well as style and content of communication. Digital media is not merely experiencing and influencing change but is proving to be a great blessing that can and does help human progress in a powerful way. Sadly, however, it is often abused or misused, bringing great harm to users themselves and to those its use is aimed at. The Vedas caution us thus: "May we tread the virtuous paths of life. May the learned also know and walk along those paths as by doing so alone can life be made successful" (Rig Veda 10, 2, 3).

It wouldn't be too far-fetched to say that the growing generation of our time being still largely under the influence of their parents at home and their teachers in school, the role of parents and teachers emerges as one of great responsibility. The burden of that role and responsibility is what **CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL AGE** attempts to make easier by way of offering interesting information, useful suggestions and inspiring thoughts about being a smart teacher in a smart-tech digital age! The contents on the one hand present vividly the real challenges and demands of the digital world and, on the other, propose appropriate practical steps for arriving at

a viable solution. The book's value is further enhanced by a judicious selection of purposeful and relevant anecdotes, stories, poems and quotations that would aid teachers, parents and others who work with young people at a close level.



There are books galore on the topic for teachers as well as for parents. But this book is not intended to be a repetition of what those books say; rather, **CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL AGE** focuses on the mission of both teacher and parent in the digital age. Frankly, mentoring in such an age is a demanding and challenging task, calling for as it does the indulgence of an intelligent

mind, an understanding heart and committed service.

It has been widely touted that to be successful, a teacher particularly must have certain qualities and characteristics essential to the profession. He or she should be well aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the use of digital media. An earnest effort has been made by the author to highlight the same and to identify ways and means to handle media-related issues to which in fact teachers need to be alert and well prepared to offer due guidance to students and their parents in terms of handling wisely the problems and difficulties arising from time to time. Essentially, this constitutes an endeavour in which we would do well to always keep in mind that abuse does not take away the validity and necessity of lawful use, even as good use does not justify abuse, **CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL AGE** being but a small candle whose light illuminates that sentiment!

The contents of this book, though small in appearance, coming as they do from the pen [or PC?] of a distinguished speaker and erudite writer, impart to the reader, student, teacher and parent alike, a sense of purpose in the use of the digital media. George Kaitholil brings to bear on **CHALLENGES OF THE DIGITAL AGE**, his 89th title to date, the riches of several decades of experience as priest, teacher and educator, experience that includes his term as General Editor of ST PAUL'S & BETTER YOURSELF BOOKS. Father George, some three million copies of whose books, published in various countries in eight languages, have been sold around the world, may be contacted at gkaitholil@gmail.com



**by Thomas Reese**

### Spirituality

One of the reasons I like Advent is that we get to hear from the Prophet Isaiah, who like the other Hebrew prophets comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. I love these prophets because despite living more than 2,500 years ago, they always seem to be talking about things that are still relevant today. They are both personal and political.

In his early writings, for example, Isaiah gives the leaders of Israel and Judah a bad time for their corruption, exploitation of the poor, and worship of false gods. That message could be preached today in almost every country in the world. Workers are exploited for profits; the rich live extravagantly while the poor go hungry. Rather than working together for the common good, it is every man for himself. And God is forgotten.

Sadly, human nature has not improved much in 2,500 years.

Isaiah was also critical of the wars that his countrymen got into. Israel with Syria tried to force Judah into a war with Assyria (today's Iraq), the superpower of his day. Judah called on Assyria for help, resulting in the destruction of

Damascus and Israel, with Judah becoming a vassal state of Assyria. Later Judah reached out to Egypt for help in revolting against Assyria. All these international adventures ended in disaster.

Sadly, the Middle East has not changed much in 2,500 years.

Like Pope Francis, Isaiah pleaded for peace. His hope was that a son of David would usher in a time of peace and justice — this was the hope of people of Israel and Judah — but their political leaders and the rich were both inept and corrupt.

Again, things have not changed.

Today, we see too many countries divided by race, religion, class and tribal loyalties. Too often, these divisions are exploited for political purposes, and sometimes these divisions lead to violence, civil war and international conflict.

The early Christians saw in Jesus the fulfillment of the hopes and promises of Isaiah and the other prophets. Matthew uses the words of Isaiah to describe the coming of Jesus: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.' "

St. Paul saw Jesus Christ as "descend-

ed from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead."

He is the Emanuel of Isaiah, the prince of peace, the just one, who will save his people from their sins.

The early Christians thought that Jesus would be coming back during their lifetimes to establish his Father's kingdom, a kingdom of justice and peace. It did not happen; God had a different plan, a plan that required our cooperation.

What the Christians gradually realized was that they are now the body of Christ in the world. It is our job to make the kingdom of God present in the world. God delegates.

Jesus fed the hungry and healed the sick while he was here; we now must continue that work or it will not be done.

He was Emanuel, "God is with us," but now we must be Emanuel, God's presence in the world.

He brought forgiveness and reconciliation to sinners; now we must be peacemakers reconciling a broken world.

He showed us how to love; now we must show the world what love means.

Matthew's Gospel teaches us that every person counts in this process. Matthew tells us how a young carpenter discovers that his fiancée is pregnant, and it was not by him. Rather than striking out with rage, he tries to protect her by dealing with it privately so that she will not be shamed. Such shaming in that time would have destroyed her and her baby.

This simple carpenter was an extraordinary man. He ended up not putting her aside but actually marrying her; he gave her and the child his name so that the boy was now of the house of David. Later, he fled his country to protect the life of this child from a cruel tyrant, and the family became refugees in Egypt.

Who could have known that the decisions of this carpenter would change the course of history? Who would have known that this refugee family would nurture the most important person to have ever lived? Who would have known that this pregnant teenager would become the most famous woman in history?

All because Joseph was a kind and loving man who understood that being a father was not just genetics.

When we see a refugee family, when we see a pregnant teenager, do we see just another problem, or do we see a member of the Holy Family? Do we see just another image on the screen, another statistic, or do we see a living, breathing, feeling person with the potential for great things?

During Christmas, we remember that Christ has come, that Christ is present here today, and that Christ will come again. But we also remember that Christ must be born in our hearts so that we can be his hands, his mind, his heart in our world today.

[Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese is a senior analyst for NCR and author of *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*. His email address is [treesesj@ncronline.org](mailto:treesesj@ncronline.org).]

# Christmas Feast in India

***Christmas Day is celebrated across India on 25 December, and is one of the most lively Christian holidays in the country.***

While Christianity likely came to India as early as A.D. 52, when St. Thomas is believed

to have evangelised and been martyred in the southern parts of the subcontinent, Christmas as such did not arrive until European colonists and missionaries arrived in the 1500s and following.

Today, there are some 24 million Christians in India, most of them concentrated in the northeastern hill country, the tiny coastal state of Goa, and in the southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. This only amounts to 2.3 percent of India's 1.5 billion or so people, however, and Christmas is barely celebrated at all in central and northern India. Nonetheless, Christmas is kept in the areas with large numbers of Christians and is even celebrated by non-Christians living in those regions.

For Roman Catholics in India, and even for some of other denominations, midnight Christmas Eve services are highly traditional. After mass, a large feast will be enjoyed by the congregants, including authentic Indian curry dishes, and gifts will be exchanged. Many churches also decorate their premises with poinsettias and make the midnight service a candlelight service.

In South India, instead of Christmas lights illuminating houses, small clay lamps are often laid on rooftops (which are usually flat) to represent Jesus as the Light of the World. In Northwest India, the Bhil ethnic group go carolling to neighbouring villages for a whole week to retell the story of Christmas in song to all they meet.



In heavily Catholic Goa, celebrations are greatly influenced by Portugal, which once owned the state as its colony. Nativity sets are seen at nearly every Christian house in town, and large, star-shaped paper

lanterns are put out to be seen by passers-by and remind them of the star that once brought the Three Wise Men to baby Jesus. T

here is also a tradition of making large amounts of sweets in a "consuada" just before Christmas and then delivering them as gifts to neighbors. Traditional sweets include: Christmas fruit cakes, "neuros," which are small fried pies stuffed with dried fruit and coconut meat, and "dodol," which is a kind of toffee treat infused with coconut and cashews.

Homes of those celebrating Christmas in India will often have "Christmas trees" of sorts, but they will probably be ornately decorated banana or mango trees. Mango leaves may also be seen in other decorations around the house. Santa Claus, often called "Father Christmas," makes it to India to reward children with presents, provided they were well behaved the previous year. However, he delivers these gifts, not in a reindeer-pulled, flying sleigh, but in a horse-pulled cart.

# Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer

Once upon a time in a place we all know and love, lived a little reindeer named Rudolph and he was very special as he had a very shiny red coloured nose.

This nose attracted attention from all over the North Pole; elves, snowmen, penguins (vacationing from the South Pole), and even the relatives of Mrs Claus would flock to see it. The elves would all gasp at the sight, saying, "Oh, what a nose! It's very shiny!"

One day a group of penguins were waddling past Santa's workshop. Santa was tinkering away at a new toy invention, trying to curb the current elf enthusiasm for platinum. His new invention was a bicycle that trailed with fog. The faster a child could pedal, the more fog the bicycle created. Santa looked up from his workbench as he heard the group of penguins saying:

"And if you ever saw him..." said one.

"You would even say it glows!" said another.

"Like a light bulb?" asked the last.

"Like a light bulb!" replied the first two.

Now, Rudolph did not particularly like all the immediate attention he was getting for his nose. Elves and snowmen would stare at him as he passed by. Penguins dressed in Hawaiian shirts would snap pictures, and Mrs Claus' relatives would force him to try their baked goodies. Worst of all, all of the other reindeer laughed and called him names like Pinocchio! Unfortunately, they never let poor



by Jubel D'Cruz



Rudolph join in any of the reindeer games.

Now, it is important to add that reindeer games were and still are the most fun of any games in the entire world. Reindeer can play monopoly, tag, freeze tag, toilet tag, bump tag, ball tag, soccer and hide and seek, among others. What makes their games so fun is that they can fly so high into the sky that they are literally dancing on clouds. This means that a reindeer can use his or her 'Get out of Jail Free' card at an altitude of 40,000 feet!

Whenever Rudolph would come around with his shiny nose, all the reindeer would sigh and whisper, "Oh, here comes Pinocchio!" and "It looks even brighter and redder and uglier today!"

Then, when Rudolph asked if he

could join in their games, the reindeer, usually Prancer or Vixen, would say, "Sorry Pinocc, I mean, Rudolph... We are playing hide and seek again today. And with your nose... well, I just don't think that's possible."

Rudolph, of course, understood why he couldn't play hide and seek with them. His nose was far too bright to do any hiding or seeking.

Before he left, however, he saw Blitzen with the monopoly board and soccer ball. That's when he realised that he was being lied to.

He ran to his dear mother and sobbed. "Oh, mom! They just don't want me to play with them. I am no fun for them. I am no fun for anyone. I wish I was never given this stupid red nose!"

Meanwhile back at Santa's workshop, a couple of elves were finishing up some last minute touches on Santa's new fog-bike when they noticed the instructions sitting on Santa's beloved workbench. As they read them over, they realised what the fog-bike could actually do. They looked at each other and grinned their elvish grins. Then they hopped on the bike, one pedaling on the left, the other on the right.

Again, it is important to add that when elves set their minds on things, they really follow through. So when they realised that the faster the bike pedaled, the more fog was made. So they decided to make enough fog to fill the entire North Pole... and the world! They pedaled and pedaled and

pedaled! One on the left pedal and one on the right! They jumped up and down on the pedals, making Santa's fog-bike go faster and faster and faster! They pedaled the bike so fast that you could no longer see them because they had created so much fog that you couldn't even see your hand if you held it in front of your face.

Santa awoke from his regular nap and set to getting dressed in his official Christmas suit --- red pants, coat, hat and black boots. He brushed out his white beard and with the help of Mrs Claus, combed down his white head of hair. Excited for the evening ahead, Santa stepped out into the Christmas Eve night. As he walked outside, he realised that he couldn't see his sleigh and his reindeer.

He whistled to all his eight reindeer. "Where are you all?"

"Here we are, Santa," they all replied in a chorus.

As they tried to take off, however, none of the reindeer could see where they were going!

"Oh, dear! We will crash into houses at this point," shouted Santa.

Just then, he could hear the group of penguins talking.

"My pictures aren't turning out in this weather!" shouted the first one.

"Ours too!" said the other two.

Then, Santa remembered the penguins' conversation about the little reindeer with the red nose. Santa called out loudly, "Rudolph! Rudolph!"

In the distance flickered a bright red light, brighter than anything you've ever seen. "Yes, Santa?" spoke Rudolph shyly.

The elves, the snowmen, the pen-

*Did you know that according to the song, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer", Santa has twelve reindeer? Sure, in the introduction it goes "There's Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen..." That makes eight reindeer. Then there's Rudolph, of course, so that makes nine. Then there's Olive. You know, "Olive the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names..." That makes ten. The eleventh is Howe. You know, "Then Howe the reindeer loved him..." Eleven reindeer. Oh, and number 12? That's Andy! "Andy shouted out with glee." The proof is in the song!*

— Jubel D'Cruz,  
Mumbai

open their own presents given to them from Santa. In Rudolph's present was his very own monopoly game. It was signed, "Love, Santa... and the reindeer." He now knew that all those at the North Pole accepted him.

Every day Rudolph played with the other reindeer, feeling their love since he could guide their way through hide and seek if it ever got stormy or, if the elves ever got hold of Santa's newly made fog-bike.

Because of his beautiful nose, all the reindeer loved him as they shouted out with glee, "Rudolph, with your nose so bright, you'll go down in history!"

And every Christmas Eve, Santa would call out to his reindeer.

And every time they took off, elves and snowmen would shout with joy, Mrs Claus' relatives would eat cookies, and the penguins would snap their pictures.

guins, Mrs Claus' relatives, Mrs Claus, and the reindeer gasped in delight. Santa smiled and said, "Rudolph, with your nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"

Rudolph was placed at the head of the sleigh. He was filled with happiness. His nose was important. He was important. He began to laugh and grow even happier as the reindeer behind him began to cheer. They lifted up high into the sky with the brightness and redness from Rudolph's nose guiding them on their way.

"Ho, Ho, Ho!" Santa exclaimed.

"Yipee!" cheered the reindeer.

When they returned home after a great Christmas Eve of delivering presents, all the reindeer began to

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# Merry Christmas, Mom



*Merry  
Christmas  
Mom*

For all of the presents  
You put under the tree,  
For all of the times  
You picked up after me...

For all of the times  
That you tucked me in tight  
And we stayed up to talk  
Long into the night

For all of the days  
I was feeling so down  
And the times that you turned  
To a smile my frown

For the cookies you baked  
And the stockings you stuffed,  
For the cuts that you healed  
And the pillows you fluffed...

For the time that you took  
Off the training wheels  
For the nights that you made me  
My favorite meals

For the years throughout  
Elementary school  
For knowing the right thing  
Isn't always what's cool

For putting up with  
Those preteen years  
For making it through  
All the laughs and the tears

For all of the days  
That you loved me so much  
Even during the times  
That I made it so tough...

For all of the memories  
We have already shared  
For the future for which  
We cannot be prepared

For being there for that one-year-old boy  
Who sat in the house and sucked on his thumb  
For working so hard at being his mom  
And making that boy into the man I've become  
Look back on all that we have been through  
And look at me now mom, how far I have come

For all of the times I'll never forget  
Merry Christmas to you, Mom  
Here's to the memories  
We haven't had yet

Merry Christmas...Love, Nick

# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

Mangalorean R.C. Bachelor born 1978, Ht. 5'6", Wt. 75kg, Wheatish complexion, Edn H.S.C working in a reputed Hotel seeks alliance R.C. girls from a respected family. Contact email :  
 owinmiranda@gmail.com /  
 merline875@gmail.com or  
 9867431942/9867572912

**6886. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1980), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 68 kgs, Fair Complexion, Sober, Edn. S.Y. B.Com., working as a Sales Expert. Contact email : sandypinto70@gmail.com

**6885. USA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1986), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. (I.T.), working as a Software Consultant. Contact Email : jane\_3105@yahoo.co.in

**6884. MANGALORE :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in April 1984), 5', Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 8th Pass, working with Interior Designer. Seeks a simple poor girl, studied upto 10th std., Contact Mob: 7795733200 / 8971267606

**6879. U.S. :** Parents of RC Mangalorean Bachelor, (Born in October 1989), 5' 10", born-bought up in Mumbai has done his Masters in Computer Science in US and is presently working there, seek alliance from RC preferably Mangalorean qualified spinsters working in US, pleasant personality and good family values. Please reply with details and photographs to amy.rigues@gmail.com

**6875. KUWAIT :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 62 kgs, Very

fair Complexion, Edn. ITI, working as a Sales representative. Contact email : roshan2421@gmail.com

**6874. MANGALORE :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1984), Ht. 5' 11", Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDMA., working as an Account Manager. Contact email : eltonjds@gmail.com

**6872. MUMBAI :** Affluent Family Mangalorean R.C.Bachelor, (Born in September 1982), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 86 kgs, Fair Complexion, Handsome, MBA, M.Com., B.Com., (Rank Holder) Banker by experience, (Director - Managing very profitable Business). Contact email :

rajiv\_alvares@yahoo.com

**6865. MUMBAI :** East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1986), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn.B.Sc., working as a Senior Risk Operations Analyst in Finance Company. Contact email : ryberg07@hotmail.com

**6856. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1973), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a HR. Contact email : clifforddsilva@yahoo.co.in

**6854. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1985), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 78 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. F.Y. B.Com., working as a Sales Executive. Contact email : rquadres85@yahoo.co.in

**6847. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in April 1973), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 75 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. SSC, Having own business. Contact Mob: 9833176215

**6846. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1985), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Office Administrator. Contact email : kevinbr85@gmail.com

**6845. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1982), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., working as a Internet Manager. Contact email : dsilvaahimsa@

gmail.com

**6841. MUMBAI :** Anglo Indian / Keralee Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1991), Ht. 170 cms, Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a Sales Executive. Contact email : mrsannieroy@yahoo.co.in

**6838. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1974), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion Edn. VII std, working as a Electrician in BEST. Having House. Seeks a simple, understanding and good natured girl. Contact email : belindacardoza777@gmail.com

**6832. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1970), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 59 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Captain in Hotel. Contact email : ignatius.matel@gmail.com

**6830. BAHRAIN :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1988), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 97 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, Marketing Professional in Public Sector. Contact email : rolsonvaz@gmail.com

**6818. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in January 1986), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Computer Engineering, working for a reputed IT firm. Contact email : celinedsz55@gmail.com

**6817. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in January 1989), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 75 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., B.I.S., working as a Sr. Software Engineer. Contact email : fernandesmelwyn08@gmail.com

**6815 MANGALORE :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in January 1971), Ht. 5' 7", Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PUC Diploma in Civil Engg., having own business, Contact email : wilmamenz@hotmail.com

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**6971. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1987), Ht. 6', Wt. 81 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. Electronics, working as a Tech. Lead, in Mysore. Seeks a graduate, tall, Mangalorean girl. Contact email : dsz.roshan@gmail.com

**6968. DUBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1990), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate in Commerce. Working in Dubai since 2014 in Indian Consulate Office. Designation Senior Customer Executive. Contact Email : shalenedsouza4@gmail.com

**6966. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1965), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 45 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. SSC., working as a Field Executive. Contact email : sameer\_bhagwatt777@rediffmail.com

**6963. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1981), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, Well settled. Contact email : freshflwr@gmail.com

**6904. MUMBAI :** Converted RC issueless Divorcee, (Born in April 1975), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 76 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn.B.Sc., MBA, working as a Manager. Contact email : sudeeptalukdar2003@gmail.com

**6895. HONAVAR :** Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1981), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 5th Std., having own property business. Contact email : rosiehorta77@gmail.com

Mob: 7977361995

**6893. MANGALORE :** Mangalorean-RC Widower, (Born in January 1967), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working in Automotive Sector. Contact email : dan\_3627@yahoo.co

**6891. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1989), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair

Complexion, Edn. B.Com., well settled. Contact email : starwin89@gmail.com

**6889. USA :** Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in July 1987), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. (EXTC), Masters in Engineering, working as a Process Engineer. Contact email: ophelia657@gmail.com

**6888. AMRITSAR :** Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1990), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 77 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Hotel Management (Diploma) in Singapore, working as a Captain. Contact email :

shephalivancet0@gmail.com

**6799. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in November 1989), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 95 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Nautical, working as a 2nd Officer in Merchant Navy. Contact email : dsouzaal.89@gmail.com

**6796. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in August 1985), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BE- IT & PGDM - Operations, working as a IT Audit. Contact email : shawndsa185@gmail.com

**6786. MUMBAI :** Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in May 1981), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BA working as a Sales Associate. Contact email : saviotorres56@gmail.com

**6784. MUMBAI :** Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in April 1982), Ht. 6', Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA working as a Accountant. Contact email : getaustin@gmail.com

**6783. MUMBAI :** Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in June 1983), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Edn. H.S.C. working as a Dept. Manager. Contact email:

faugustine992@gmail.com

**6778. USA :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in December 1989), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, Very fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. Electronics / Telecom Engineering,

M.S. in USA, working as an Engineer. Contact email : jenniferdmello@gmail.com

**6777. MUMBAI :** Wanted Bride (Spinster, widow or Divorcee) Mangalorean or Keralite christian for a Bachelor Mangalorean R.C., Ht. 5' 9", Age 49 years (Born in April 1968), Own Business, own house in Mumbai & Mangalore. Girl should be min. HSC, Ht. above 5' 5". Contact email : patberin@yahoo.com OR Mob: 09322156322

**6172. MUMBAI :** Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in February 1978), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 86 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., Position : Financial Consultant. Seeks a alliance from RC graduate/pst graduate spinster. Contact email:

raceangelreb@yahoo.in

**6507. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor (Hearing Impaired) (Born in September 1989), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 62 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. HSC., Dip. in Computer Hardware. Working as a Cashier. Contact email : clifford9948@gmail.com OR 9920331773

**6485. MUMBAI:** North Indian R.C. Bachelor, (Born in October 1974), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for an MNC in Mumbai as Back Office Executive. Contact email : awr88@rediffmail.com

**6228. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor (Born in December 1972). Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 65 kgs., Wheatish Complexion, Edn. S.S.C. A/C Tech. Course, working as a A/C. Technician in Voltas. Contact email : lawrencedias321@gmail.com / Mob: 8291056939

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# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - BRIDES

**6853. DUBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in February 1989), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 79 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, Edn. M.Com., PGDM -HR, working as a HR Assistant in Real Estate Firm in Dubai. Contact email : sav\_cm@yahoo.com.

**6990. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1981), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. F.Y. B.Com., Completed Aviation Course & holds knowledge of French Language and computer course. Contact email : evane\_martis@yahoo.co.in

**6870. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1974), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Ed., Self employed. Contact email : caand.reb@gmail.com

**6855. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5', Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. CA by profession working for privated company. Contact email : mithalimenezes@gmail.com

**6858. BHOPAL :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1993), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. Computer Science and MBA in HRM working in Bangalore. Contact email : godwinsvd@gmail.com

**6851. BAHRAIN :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1989), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 64 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, Edn. B.E. Masters in IT Management, working as a I.T. Service Delivery Engineer. Contact email : sjbs2k18@gmail.com

**6850. MUMBAI:** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 56 kgs, Fair Complexion, Smart looking, Edn. BBA, working as an Asst. Marketing Manager. Contact email : alisha.v.fernandes@gmail.com

**6849. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in

November 1990), Ht. 5', Wt. 51 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, Edn. MBA in Marketing, working as a Assistant Manager in Oil Company. Contact email : darlet\_vaz27@yahoo.co.in

**6848. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5', Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M. Phil, Ph. D., Child Psychology, School Counsellor. Contact email : gonsalvespritika@gmail.com

**6843. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 59 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., Accounts and Finance, working as a Sales Mis., Contact email : ncleret@yahoo.in

**6842. USA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 57 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Pharma, Masters in Pharmaceutical Sciences - USA, working as a Formulation Sccientist in Laboratories in USA. Contact email : jgonsalves@wockhardt.com

**6839. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Issueless Divorcee, goodlooking, (Born in May 1980), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., MBA., working as a HR in TCS., Contact email : matrimonywatch@gmail.com

**6837. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1992), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 85 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, Profession : Baker. Contact email : ludvinalobo@yahoo.com

**6836. CANADA :** Parents of RC 26 years spinster, (Born in July 1991), Ht. 5' 4", B.A., B.Ed., (Honours) teaching in Canada (Govt. Job) seeks alliance from well-educated Bachelor (Preferably settled in Canada) within 28 to 32 years with good values, height between 5' 5" to 6' 2". Please email to musicfan0323@gmail.com with recent

photo and phone no.

**6835. USA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in February 1986), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 54 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Phil/Ph.D., doing Doctoral Studies/Working. Contact email : sathi.monteiro@gmail.com

**6834. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 90 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BBA/BMS, Profession : Make-up Artist. Contact email : hycintharemedios@gmail.com

**6869. MANGALORE :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1985), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 52 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B. Com.,pursuing MBA, working as an Executive Asst. in **BANGALORE**. Contact email : weddingvow85@gmail.com

**6868. CANADA :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. Medium, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A., HR Toronto and International Business Management Toronto. Only U.S. and Candian Citizens from good family background apply. Contact email : sugarlog2009@hotmail.com

**6984. GOA :** Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1986), Ht. 165 cms, Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A. working. Contact email : jane.matthews14@gmail.com

## MATRIMONIAL

**6822. KUWAIT :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1982), Ht. 5' 4", Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. Post Graduate in Mumbai University, Teacher in Kuwait. Contact email : pereiralucy2017@yahoo.com Tel: 00965-60402765 / 9867308911

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# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - BRIDES

**6792. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBBS., pursuing MBA., Doctot by profession. Contact email : dr.criss25@gmail.com

**6791. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1987), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. C.A., Working as a Senior Specialist, Seeks a suitable match. Contact Email : jolie\_rosetta@yahoo.co.in

**6790. MUMBAI :** Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1987), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 58 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.A., LL.B., (M.A - I), working as a Legal Executive. Contact email : robertalbuquerque10@gmail.com

**6785 MUMBAI :** Alliance invited for 1985 born RC East Indian Spinster, 5' 6", B.Com., LLB., LLM., Manager in an MNC, from Mumbai, Maharashtra for suitably educated RC bachelor, 32-35 years from Mumbai/abroad preferably Engineers/Doctors/Lawyers/CA/MBA. Kindly reply with details to : faith\_forever\_2017@yahoo.com

**6782 MANGALORE :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt.50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BHM, working as a Receptionist. Contact email : savinajmascarenhas@gmail.com

**6780 GOA :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt.50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.B.B.S., M.D. (Armenia), Doctor by profession. Working in **DELHI**. Contact email : samantha.saldanha07@gmail.com

## MATRIMONIAL

**6679. USA :** US Based RC Spinster, 28, 5' 3", B. Tech., MBA from premier institutions, talented, caring, slim, attractive personality, senior manager in renowned MNC invites alliance from well-educated, professionally qualified, well-placed RC bachelors with good family background and strong Christian values. Kindly e-mail profile with picture to msp241289@gmail.com

**6779 MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt.50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A. in Literature, Teacher by profession. Contact email : angelagurjao1@gmail.com

**6776. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic spinster, (Born in September 1992), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as an Executive. Contact email : neilcarvalho1234@gmail.com

**6826. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1992), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 46 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA PGDM, working as a Portfolio Manager in Foreign Bank. Contact email : alicerpraphael@gmail.com

**6825. MUMBAI :** East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1986), Ht. 5' 5", Fair Complexion, Edn. Graduate + Masters working as a HR. Contact email :

shobhna\_dsa@ymail.com

**6824. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, working as a Merchandiser. Contact email : prislobo10@gmail.com

**6822. KUWAIT :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1982), Ht. 5' 4", Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. Post Graduate in Mumbai University, Teacher in Kuwait. Contact email :

pereiralucy2017@yahoo.com

Tel: 00965-60402765 / 9867308911

**6821. UAE :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1992), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., in Zoology from Mumabi, working as a Content Writer

## MATRIMONIAL

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## Anxiety in BJP camp?

By the time this piece appears in print, the results of the semi finals involving five States would have been out. The exit polls show that for the general public, Masjid, Mandir, Statues, Beef and Cows matter little. For the restless youth, they want development which will ensure their livelihood and financial benefits not only for them but for the poorest of poor in general and the farmers in particular. If the exit polls reflect the final results, there is a lot to worry for the BJP. Not that heavens will fall with the loss of a couple of States, it is the importance of MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. This belt is the home of Hindutwa [cow belt] and results would have shown that the people are no longer willing to be fooled. The tamasha over beef is more of an anti-minority stunt. Beef is officially sold and consumed in Goa under the very nose of the BJP government. It has precious little to do with religious sentiments per se.

The BJP will brush aside the results as something to do with anti-incumbency in all the three States. While that may be partially true, the people have sent unambiguous message to Narendra Modi and Amit Shah duo to revisit their priorities. Actually nothing that was promised, which could impact the lives of people, was delivered. The Mallayas, Niravs, Mehmuls and a host of others with suit-boot have prospered. Nearly 5 years of stand-up comedy by Modi and Shah to mock the opposition and the Gandhi family was good entertainment and people enjoyed Modi's jibes and one-liners as well. People clapped generously which Modi unfortunately mistook for political support by way of votes. Each election rally was a new comedy episode. Modi and Shah must wake up now fast, stop being comedians and to go for drastic course correction - forget the Gandhis, Opposition, Mandir, Beef, Cows and Statues if the NDA hopes to get a majority in 2019. Stop thinking you are invincible or pretend to be the only nationalists in India. BJP is power hungry else why would they force the ailing Goa CM Manohar Parrikar to continue in office? They fear internal power struggle there and consequent loss of power there to Congress.

These State elections were fought with no holds barred and each side had been attacking the other with all sorts of names and questioning each other's families, parentage, religion, gotras etc.

## IEWS on NEWS

To link dollar rate to Modi's mother's age was outright mean on the part of the Congress but come to think of it, on a lighter note, the rupee actually started gaining strength immediately thereafter. The BJP always says Rahul is irrelevant but then why are Modi and Shah talking only about him day in and day out? You talk about and target someone, mock him, belittle him if you are 'scared' of that person. Whether the BJP admits it publicly or not, they know for sure that Rahul is the only leader who can stand up and challenge Modi on the national stage. You call him dynast but deal with the likes of Shiv Sena and Akali Dal which are also dynastic parties. You call him Pappu mockingly. By the way, the Argentina media called Narendra Modi 'Apu' when he landed there for the G-20 Summit. BJP should stop calling Rahul Gandhi Pappu unless they want the finals [2019 elections] to be Apu v/s Pappu.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Ambitious Sidhu

Navjot Singh Sidhu is one man who has always been in the news – be it in cricket, realty shows or politics. With the gift of the gab [being proficient in English, Hindi and Punjabi] he can outwit any other politician. In fact he is known for his wit and his impromptu 'shayeries' at every opportunity. Even before he joined the BJP his relations with the Akali Dal [ Badals] were strained. The man was keen to create a niche for himself in the Punjab. The Badals did not want Sidhu to be involved in the State. The ambitious man was keen to fight the 2014 general elections from Chandigarh but in the face of opposition from the Akalis this prestigious seat was given to Arun Jaitley the Union Finance Minister who lost it though to Capt Amarinder Singh. Sidhu was very upset at being snubbed till he was gladly accepted by the Congress. Here too it is reported that he was insistent on being projected as a CM face for at least Dy CM in the Punjab elections but the party could not afford to upset the powerful Captain.

When Imran Khan of PTI won the elections in Pakistan and appointed Prime Minister he invited some of his cricketing friends for the swearing-in ceremony. While the likes of Gavaskar



by Marshall Sequeira

cleverly wriggled out citing cricketing engagements, Sidhu accepted the invitation and was seated by the [right?] side of Pak Army Chief Bajwa a known India hater. It was he who made the offer of Kartarpur corridor to Sidhu with that famous hug. Sidhu discussed the matter with the Indian government to take the proposal forward which ultimately culminated in the foundation laying ceremonies on both sides of the divide. Sidhu once again was invited by Imran Khan who travelled to the other side where two Central Sikh ministers were also present. He was more popular there than the two central ministers who kept a low key. While Sidhu overstepped his brief by calling the Pak PM a 'farishta', Imran Khan praised him to the sky even suggesting sarcastically that he could one day be the PM of India and take the stalled peace process forward. This did not go well with the Indian side and his return saw a political slug fest and he was even dubbed an ally of Hafez Sayed and a supporter of the Khalistan movement. To some extent, he embarrassed the Congress party which had no option but to support him since he had gone to the other wide with the blessings of Rahul Gandhi. Capt. Amarinder Singh had himself declined the invite.

On Kartarpur, the Pak FM Qureshi spilled the beans when he spoke about a 'googly' by Pak PM and showed the sinister motive that was behind this dubious initiative. He got it all wrong. Actually, the army chief Bajwa, who installed Imran Khan as PM threw a googly at his own PM, when he offered Kartarpur corridor to Sidhu. Such an important announcement should have come from the Pak PM and not army chief. Though Imran Khan publicly disagreed with his FM, it showed as to who is calling the shots in that country. Whether, this corridor will escalate the Khalistan movement, only time will tell. India needs to be extra vigilant but Sidhu 'Navjot' [New Light?] will play some role or the other in Indo-Pak relations for sure.

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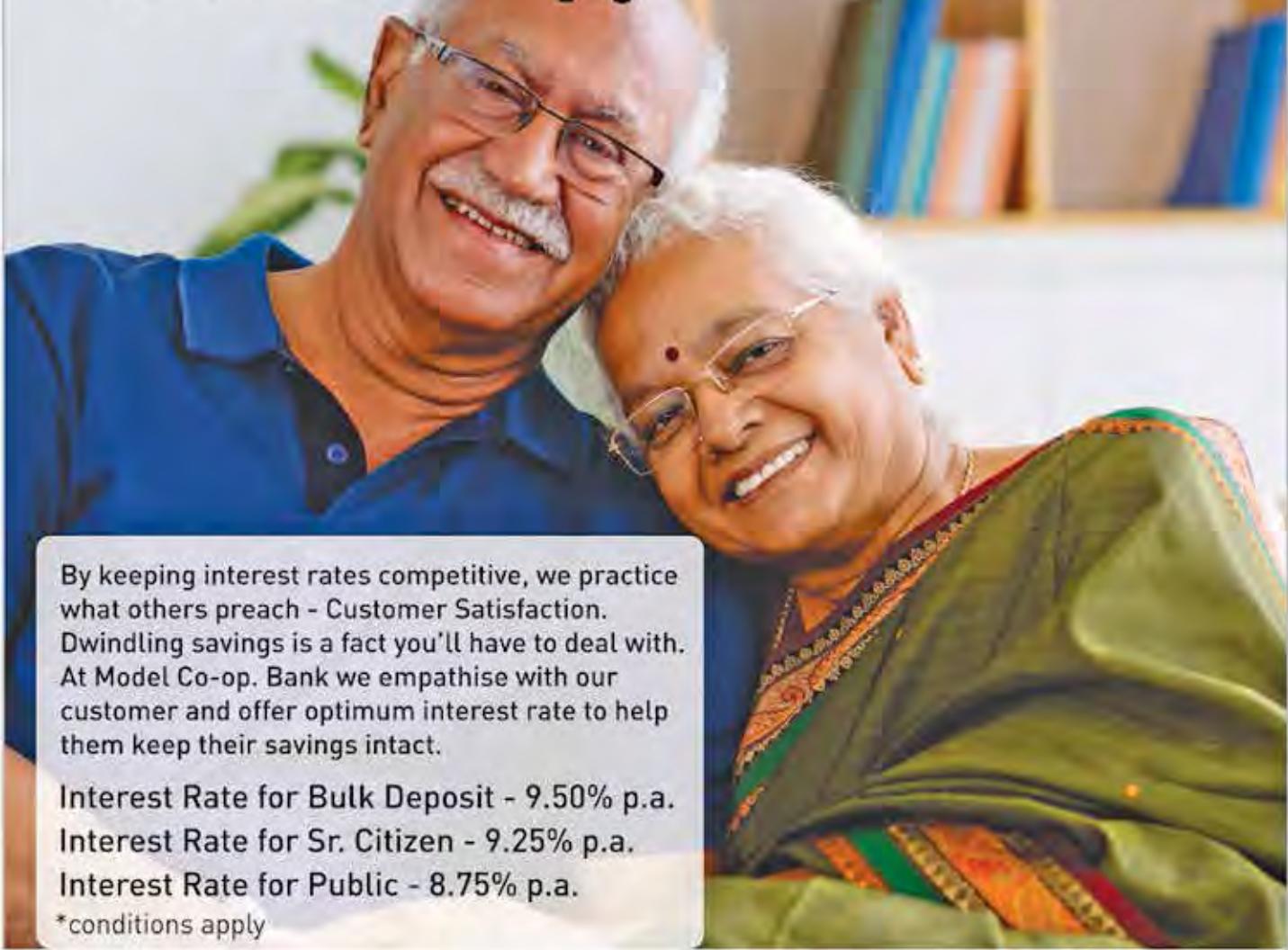
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