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Mother

—

The Heart Of Christmas!



by Ladislaus L
D'Souza



“What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future.”

— Agnes M. Pahro

It was late that evening when the smartphone rang. “Your mother seems extremely disoriented,” said the voice at the other end, adding, “Perhaps a visit from you might help – I won’t say more than that,” before hanging up. Out rushed the son, who, revving up his car, made a dash for the Old Age Home [OAH]. Though visiting hours were long past, the Administrator allowed Alderin* into his mother’s room, where he found her slouched in her chair, quite disenchanted. Perking up on hearing her only son call out, “Hey Mum!” Bursting into tears, Christabelle feebly asked, “How come? Haven’t seen you in months!” “Been a bit busy, Mum! So sorry!” embracing

her warmly.

It was a while before Alderin was able to calm her down before saying, “Now tell me, Mum - what can I do for you to make up for the lapse?” “Hmm..., well - I’m dying of heat - maybe you could just replace that ceiling fan! It squeaks and squawks, disturbing my sleep. In fact I think almost all the fans in this place are like that. I feel so bad for the other inmates.” “Issue resolved, Mum!”

At ten the next morning, Alderin was at the OAH with a dozen new fans and an army of electricians who in a couple of hours, had all the fans in the facility replaced. “Well Mum! Howzzat for a change!?!” Beaming from ear to ear Christabelle gave him a *thumbs-up!* “What else would you like me to do for you or for the Home, Mum?” “Hmm..., - how about a fridge stocked with vari-

ables—ha, ha, hah!! I’m joking, son. But honestly, there have been times when I’ve gone to bed hungry because I’d had no appetite for what was being served and there was nothing in the small kitchen fridge for me to pick and eat.” “Done!” he said before zipping out again. It was nearing Tea time when Alderin returned, this time with two king-sized Refrigerators! By the time Christabelle and the rest of the inmates had trooped in for their cuppa, the fridges, both well stocked with stuff that he felt the old might like to dig into at will, were already functional, one in the refectory, the other in the kitchen!

Later, after Tea, when mother and son settled down on the wonky sofa in her room, Christabelle got pretty emotional as Alderin asked, “Mum, why didn’t you tell me all along? You’ve been here five years but never once complained

and so I wasn't even aware of your difficulties..." "Well son, when did you last come anyway? I waited for you last month, certain that you'd come to wish me for Mother's Day – but you didn't! I looked for you last Sunday, hoping you'd accompany me to Dad's graveside for Father's Day – but no! All the inmates here had a son or daughter visiting and spending time with them – except poor me," she trailed off, sobbing. Unable to contain his emotions, Alderin dug his face into his palms, muttering over and over again: 'Sorry Mum! I'm Sorry! So sorry....!' As their sobs softly receded, Mother sat upright and, cupping son's face in her palms, said, "It's not for my helplessness that I grieve, Alderin, but for how you will manage when your children have you and Sonal admitted here in your old age." Alderin swooned as the lesson instantly sank in.

In time, Alderin's frequent visits with family cheered old Mum up. In fact, in the months leading to Christmas that year, unbeknown to her, Alderin and his wife Sonal, had very graciously taken the OAH Management into confidence well in advance concerning their plans to take Christabelle back home at Christmas for good. Incidentally, Christabelle was a name coined by her own dear grandmother of happy memory amidst the excitement of her birth on Christmas Day, 25 December! And so it was that, unbeknown to her, the family was feverishly working on an extra-special Christmas present for her—making her designated room in their new, palatial house as comfortable as they could. A veritable paradise on Earth, it had a decorative ceiling fan as well as air-conditioning, not to mention a decent-sized refrigerator stocked with the choicest delights, apart from curtains in her favourite *pista green!*

Come Christmas and the house looked scintillating! The couple's 14-year old daughter, Meena and 10-year old son, Selwyn, decorated the Tree and set up the Crib besides choosing the fairy-lights to illuminate the entire house and

its front lawn. Visiting her two days before Christmas, Alderin asked, "Mum, what would you like as a Christmas present this year!" Smiling wistfully she replied, "What better present than the Christmas Night Mass at the Cathedral!" Recalling how she loved to sing in the Cathedral Choir, Alderin instantly replied, "Done! The Mass is at nine tomorrow night." "You mean you will take me there?" "Of course, Mum! I'll pick you up at seven for the long drive to the Cathedral! Is that okay?" "Sure Alderin!" said she, hugging him gratefully.

Conscious of how elegantly Christabelle always dressed, particularly on occasions like Christmas, Alderin and Sonal picked up for her one of the finest Christmas dresses they saw at Spencer's. It was at six on Christmas Eve that the family marched into her room, holding aloft her Christmas dress to her utter astonishment—the start of a Christmas she'd never forget! The delight evident on the face of the lovely old lady was to be seen to be believed, what with the Cardinal-Archbishop recognizing her and stopping by her chair to bless her! Christmas

Mass was followed by a drive up the hill where the kids hurried out of the car to stand at the gate and sing their Nana a welcome song they had composed to the chiming of tiny Christmas bells!

"Wow! It's like entering wonderland!" exclaimed Christabelle. "WELCOME THEN TO WONDERLAND, *your* home forever!" chirped Sonal. Mum, not quite trusting her ears, said, "We're gonna be late to return to the Home, dears!" "Not at all!" they chorused together! Ascending the steps to the main entry of the house with her, the kids said, "Nana, we have a surprise for you! But you must close your eyes as we lead you in, okay?" "Okayeee!" Moments later, standing before her room, the kids said, "Now open your eyes!" And as she did so, Alderin and Sonal standing on either side of the door, together with the kids chorused: "Welcome to your new home on your birthday, Mama/Nana!" The final meltdown was the framed poster from her former house above the doorpost that said: What is home without a Mother!

**All names changed for reasons of privacy*

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The Peripheries at Christmas!

As Christmas approaches, the defining image that should find a place in our minds and hearts is that of 'periphery'. For Joseph and the heavily pregnant Mary, we are told in Scripture that *'there was no place for them in an inn'*. They are migrants in a town which is unwelcoming, hostile to the 'outsider'; they are exiled to the outskirts and forced to make home in a stable which lies on the periphery. This also becomes the maternity home for Mary where she will give birth to the Son of God! The stable becomes symbolic of the periphery complete with stink and squalor, the hay and the dung, the biting cold and meagre swaddling clothes. In the midst of this, God unconditionally gives himself to mankind!

Christmas is also about shepherds who lived on the peripheries; simple, unlettered, rugged folk; their expertise was in tending sheep. Their life was difficult: with long nights spent in the open and shivering cold. Their sheep were precious: each one had a name and they knew them by name; they smelt of

the sheep. They were ever-present to them! When one was lost, they went in search of the lost one, until found and then they rejoiced! When they were given the "good news" of the birth of the Saviour they leave their sheep behind (their personal attachments) and ran in haste to worship. Their priorities



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH
SJ

were clear. They lived on the peripheries but were chosen to be the first witnesses to the herald of the angels!

The Magi were also people who lived on the peripheries: physically in a distant land. They possessed wisdom and wealth. They had a singular mission in life: a relentless search for the truth and for the Messiah that would epitomise that truth. They go all out of their way to find him and give him of their best! The Magi find solace and spiritual fulfilment when they encounter the Saviour. They also realise that having found the truth they have to take a stand for justice. They go back home by 'another way' thwarting the evil designs of a ruthless, jealous, pow-

er-crazy King. There are of course repercussions with the killing of innocent children. The Holy Family of Nazareth is safe – but now as refugees – living in the periphery of a foreign land which gives them the much-needed safety and security.

The shepherds represent those whom Jesus identified with in his public ministry: the excluded and the exploited, the marginalised and the minorities, the poor and the hungry. The Magi on the other hand are those whom he referred to and even embraced in the ushering of a society based on justice and inclusiveness. The Good Samaritan and the gentiles, Mary Magdalene and Simon of Cyrene; these were the outsiders: not the proverbial 'chosen ones'; not the Pharisees and the scribes or the Sadducees of his times – whom he lambasted and called them a brood of vipers, whitened sepulchres; hypocrites!

It is without doubt that Jesus came for those on the peripheries; he took sides with them and visibly fought for their human rights. We see all this unfold so poignantly in the stories of the

woman caught in adultery and that of the healing of the ten lepers. From the time he proclaims his mission on earth in the synagogue at Nazareth, right up to the parable of the Last Judgement – Jesus makes it evidently clear that true discipleship is essentially responding to the people on the peripheries and enriching their lives. It is the song of the Magnificat which Mary sings when she goes to visit and stay with her kinswoman Elizabeth.

It is significant therefore that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which the nations of the world gave to themselves on 10 December 1948, in many ways reflect the Gospel of Jesus which embraces the inalienable dignity of the human person. Less than a year later on 26 November 1949, the Constitution of India gave to its citizens a vision of a society based on justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Gifts which are God-given graces and heralded by the Angels at the birth of Jesus.

On 12 August 2020, Pope Francis at his weekly general audience, said that humans have “inalienable dignity” because humanity was created in the image of God, quoting the Second Vatican Council’s pastoral constitution, ‘Gaudium et Spes’. He asserted that, “in modern culture, the closest reference to the principle of the inalienable dignity of the person is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Saint John Paul II defined as a ‘milestone on the long and difficult path of the human race’ and as ‘one of the highest expressions of the human conscience.’” He added, “Rights are not only individual, but also social; they are of peoples, nations. The human being, indeed, in his or her personal dignity, is a social being, created in the image of God, One and Triune. We are social beings; we need to live in this social harmony, but when there is selfishness, our outlook does not reach others, the community, but focuses on ourselves, and this makes us ugly, nasty and selfish, destroying harmony. While we work

for the cure of a virus that affects everyone without distinction, faith urges us to work seriously and actively to fight indifference in the face of violations of human dignity. We want to recognize the human dignity in every person, whatever his or her race, language or condition might be.”

In this key message Pope Francis gives to every follower of Jesus three major lessons(i) that every human is created in the image and likeness of God, endowed with dignity(ii) every human has individual and social rights (iii) our faith teaches us to protect and promote the rights of all- particularly those who live on the peripheries. All these are non-negotiable dimensions for Christian witness!

As we look around us, we sadly realise that many Christians do not follow what Pope Francis is constantly exhorting us to do; much less, many do not seem to care about the person and message of Jesus and particularly what he reminds us about in the ‘Last Judgement’. Let us take a closer look at ourselves: we are certainly preoccupied with our studies and careers, our families and

work; for several, having a cushy job with a big salary is all that matters. As Christmas approaches many of us get caught up in the web of materialism: new clothes and expensive gifts; dining, drinking and dancing; the focus of the ‘season’ becomes Santa Claus and Christmas Tree; lights and decorations – all of which have absolutely nothing to do with the birth of Jesus. None of these are perhaps ‘wrong’ or ‘bad’. But where then is the Jesus of the stable? The one born on the periphery?

Discipleship is a call to pay greater attention to the realities around us! There are enough of examples to show how the fundamentals of the Constitution are being systematically destroyed; the judiciary is often compromised with judgements favouring the rich and powerful. The rights of the Kashmiri people have been violated after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A. For more than a year thousands of farmers have been protesting on the borders of Delhi and in several parts of the country for the unconditional repeal of the three anti-farm laws. The Government finally gave in! Migrant workers and poor labourers have suffered immensely because of the pandemic. The Adivasis are denied their legitimate rights of the forests, land, water and other natural resources. Vested interests profiteer immensely; the mining mafia in nexus with corrupt politicians have no qualms of conscience in destroying the environment and our precious eco-systems. The Dalits of our country are still being treated in a very inhuman way; many of them eke out an existence through manual scavenging. Women and children are trafficked. We have experienced how late Fr Stan Swamy and several others (like the Bhima-Koregaon 15) are incarcerated under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) just because they take a stand for the excluded and the exploited. Minorities are at the receiving end of a vicious hate campaign! The so-called ‘love jihad’ laws in some states are violative of a citizen’s right to marry a person

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of his/her choice and to freely profess the religion of one's choice. Even the freedom of speech and expression is being throttled in the country. The rich become richer at the expense of the poor!

In his Encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti', Pope Francis provides a road map for authentic witnessing in today's world. It includes the fundamental: the dignity of every person is paramount. "Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations. This does not detract from their great dignity as human persons, a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being. Unless this basic principle is upheld, there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity" (#107). This is the essence of Catholic Social Teaching. Dialogue then becomes critical in a society in which truth, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are expected to thrive. In the words of Pope Francis, "Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word "dialogue". If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue" (#198). Dialogue is meaningless if it is not rooted in a process of discernment, however difficult.

'Fratelli Tutti' highlights the need of good politics today. "What is needed is a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis" In other words, a "healthy politics... capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia" (#177)." Pope Francis makes his intent clear saying that one (the Church) has to be "open to bearing witness in today's world, open to faith hope and love for the Lord and

for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors". His words are incisive, "The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother". And in imitation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, "we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation." There could not be a stronger call to get out of our slumber and out of our comfort zones.

Christmas then, is God pitching his tent amongst his people. In his 'Gitanjali' our Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore expresses this powerfully, "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!

Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground

and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.

He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.

Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!....

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!

What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained?

Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow".

Like our God, who gives of himself to those who live on the peripheries – only when we truly make an effort to identify with them and to enrich their lives, will we be honestly able to say that we celebrate Christmas! After all, Christmas is about the peripheries!

**(Fr. Cedric Prakash SJ is an internationally acclaimed human rights, reconciliation & peace activist/writer. Contact: cedricprakash@gmail.com)*

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Celebrating a 'Good-Bye Covid' Christmas

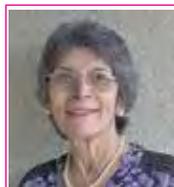
Covid has been playing a crazy game of hide and seek for the past two years. Everyone is watching and waiting and waiting for it to make its exit, but there's no silver line on the horizon. Now whether its in China or Ethiopia, Pakistan, Egypt or India, millions of Christians around the world are throwing caution to the winds, and preparing for the wonder and joy of the Feast of Christmas. They are awaiting the coming of the Messiah Jesus Christ, and so his birth takes on a whole new meaning. Let's put the pandemic woes behind, and let's be agents of God's hope and joy and join our brothers and sisters in celebrating a 'good-bye Covid,' through the Christmas blessing.

We're already closing in on an illustrious season of "jingle bells and roasting smells..." The Star of Bethlehem is twinkling. The shopping malls are brightly lit and garishly decorated, there is the sound of friendly voices and children's laughter. The lanes and bye lanes are resounding with melodious carols...its Christmas time! There's hope, faith and good cheer everywhere, and everyone is preparing for this great event. 25th December, the birthday of Jesus, an event of the Incarnation, a religious and cultural celebration among billions of people around the world.

Who can ruin Christmas now? Some say, climate change is ruining Christmas, others that Dr. Anthony Fauci is ruining it, still others are screaming that the vaccine mandates and variants are ruining Christmas. No one can ruin Christmas for it is as special day of our Saviour Jesus Christ. It welcomes a season of love, family, children, and sharing, and everyone's going to make the best of it. Nothing can stop Christ-



mas from coming, not even a pandemic. God's house will be aglow, adorned with crib and angels, bells and the Star. Our holiday traditions may look different due to protocols, but there will be warm hugs, sharing cooked food, sweets and goodies, and gifts galore that bring joy and happiness to children and people. We have every reason to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World despite the new normal.



by:
**Dr Jeanette
Pinto**

The true meaning of Christmas is remembering a greater purpose. This is our Christmas now. It is not just a holiday, nor a remembrance of family and friends. Its not just a time to give gifts and eating goodies only. It's also a time of God showing His love for us, it could be a time of healing and renewed strength. The essence of Christmas is that humanity is eagerly waiting for thousands of years for the coming of Jesus who will save us. It's a happy glorious time of the year for the Universe. PEACE with God, as promised to us at Christmas was delivered and made effective by way of our faith. The Heavenly King, the son of God, wrapped in His Father's overflowing love is coming, that is the true immeasurable gift of love. This could be an entirely new season of Covid Christmas celebration, so let's prepare to receive this spiritually newborn child

in joy and enthusiasm.

In the past two years, we have experienced how technology has taken Jesus to the ends of the earth making it possible as recorded in Matthew 28: 18-20, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations....." The challenges of lockdowns, social distancing and forced protocols, have been overcome in a magical way by the benefits of technology. Jesus has left His abode, and literally entered our homes. More Christians and others have begun to know and grow closer to Jesus.

Have you watched the TV serial 'The Chosen'? It tells the story of what happened over 2000 years ago? It offers viewers a glimpse into what the daily and extraordinary life of Jesus Christ and his disciples might have looked like in those days. It invites millions of viewers the world over into His story. The acting, the story telling is believable and excellently presented. It has an incredibly compelling way to promote the values of **humanity, dignity, love, truth and justice**. It is biblical, the production superb, and the actors tug at your heart. One longs for more, as it has the life-changing power of encountering Jesus – **fully HUMAN, fully DIVINE**, -well, that's the Christmas miracle! Yes, its the same babe Jesus in the manger.

May God fill your household this Christmas and throughout 2022 with His abiding presence and the everlasting gifts made available through His Promised Son Jesus - the Ultimate Gift – who came to bring salvation to the world. Let's celebrate, wishing Covid Good-bye, and feel renewed with joyful hope, wonder and eager expectation for the coming of the Messiah. All glory to God who is victorious. May the incarnate and living Word of God, Jesus Christ, abundantly bless you and yours this Advent and Christmas.



Christmas In the Midst of High Inflation and Communal Strife

by *Don Aguiar.*

Our story leading to present day reality begins with Mansa Musa or Musa I of Mali, an African king who consistently figures in the list of richest people in the world (Inflation-adjusted). One of his given names was 'Lord of the (Gold) Mines of Wangara'. Lest we forget, Gold was the 'Money' in those days.

One fine day in December, Musa decided to go to Jerusalem, to satisfy his curiosity, having heard from the people that a saviour has been born, to be the king of the Jews – Of course, it was easier said than done. Bethlehem and Jerusalem were thousands of miles away from Timbuktu, Mali. Ultimately he did make that journey.

Famously, he took a ton of 'money' (Gold) with him to aid in his journey (Well in his defence, it was thousands of miles away). About 60,000 labourers and soldiers carried 2 Kgs each and their camels carried 13 Kgs each, bringing the tally to an estimated ~1,30,000 Kgs of Gold.

Being a generous King, he donated

Gold left and right to every poor person he saw on the way. Regions of Cairo, Bethlehem and Jerusalem became instantly 'rich'. The estimated donation is ~32,000 Kgs of Gold or ~\$2 Billion in today's estimate.

Do you think Musa's kind-hearted generousness made Cairo, Bethlehem and Jerusalem flourish? That would be the perfect fairy-tale ending, but Economics and the Law of Unintended Consequences beg to differ. Musa caused a severe hyperinflation in these parts.

Since everyone became 'rich' overnight, they refused to work unless they're paid a hefty salary. So business owners had no choice but to increase prices to support wages. Over a year or two, high prices drained people off their Gold and they became poorer than before.

When Musa found Jesus, he was living in a normal house in Jerusalem because by this time Mary, Joseph and Jesus had to flee King Herod's wrath. By his encounter with Jesus, with striking faith, he either became a Christian on his own or was quick to convert fully upon later encountering an Apostle of

Jesus. He was so strong in his belief that he was willing to embrace martyrdom – he believed though even he had not seen Jesus. He believed in Him when he saw Him a little infant on Mary's knee, and worshipped Him as a king.

As Musa returned, disheartened to see the damage he'd caused, his joy, goodwill and peace of his generosity melted into the season of giving. He tried to remedy the situation, but it was too late. Regions of Cairo, Bethlehem and Jerusalem would continue to be devastated for years to come.

If you think this story is unrealistic, history repeated itself as recently as in 2016 -2020. The Indian government enforced demonetization in November 2016, which devastated the economy and a total country-wide lockdown in March 2020 due to the pandemic. This caused, you guessed it, inflation, meaning prices increased every day and still continue to rise till date, as the people became poorer than before.

George Gobble, the Stand-up Comedian, once said "If inflation continues to

soar, you're going to have to work like a dog just to live like one." That's Dark Humour, but we're already in the midst of excess liquidity. What will follow this isn't too difficult to guess.

It will not be an exact repeat. History doesn't repeat, but rhymes. There's no way to guess where it will blow up. But there's little doubt about whether it will.

In the midst of the job loss, high inflation, communal strife and persecution, pandemic, and so on, Christmas once more has arrived with the message that brings us the hope and joy, and the passage from selfishness to sharing from war or intolerance to peace, it is a parable of change that takes place when men and women open their hearts to the authentic values of growth and social harmony, but will it be too late for India – "peace on earth and goodwill to all men".

The Indian Prime Ministers meeting with the Pope on 30th October 2021, gave the Catholic community in India this hope of a parable of change with the meeting scheduled for thirty minutes, getting extended much longer, with embraces, kind gestures and cordial discussions. The Indian Prime Minister then invited the Pope to visit India.

With a meeting like this is the Indian Prime Minister trying to project his image as that of a tolerant and secular leader? Will it usher in a new beginning of trust, cooperation and inclusiveness for the Indian Catholics? Will it help stop all such negativity surrounding Indian Catholics to some extent?

It is hoped that the meeting will end the "smear campaign" and "witch hunting" against the Indian Catholics allegedly by the BJP and other right wing groups, to which the Indian Prime Minister owes allegiance to, and who often accuse leaders of the Church of forcible conversion. The BJP regime

even ordered probes against various entities led or owned by the Church organisations to block foreign funding. On several occasions the Church has raised the issue of intolerance in BJP-ruled states. Amid the backdrop of such issues in recent years, the Indian Prime Minister's meeting with the Pope is viewed with great curiosity.

Our curiosity has bested us. Something about this meeting has made us ponder if the meeting with the Pope has led the Indian prime Minister to a parable of change as he not only met the Pope but also held a copy of the Bible to his head presented to him by the Pope and received the Pope's blessings. By doing so the Indian Prime Minister told the world from the Vatican that India is secular and a democracy. A strong message to his right wing fundamentalists back home.

Fortunately, though, the Pope cannot be fooled easily. He does know the extreme Indian situation of communal venom, hatred, intolerance and torture that the Indian Christians are regularly subjected to. He is also aware of gross violation of human rights and religious freedom in India, violence carried out

by the state and non-state actors, including the Sangh Parivar, and prosecution by the investigating agencies currently cracking down on individuals and groups in a finely choreographed black opera as well as the prevailing atmosphere of xenophobia. **And so the Pope conveyed his appropriate message through the gift he gave Modi illustration the Bible verse. Only one hopes that the true papal message is understood and heeded.**

Perhaps this time round Christmas brings with it the hope and joy that on the Indian Prime Minister returns, it will set a new beginning where we hope..... that he bring in with him the determination to bring people of all faiths including the Indian Catholic community back into that fold where everyone respects each other and where India once again becomes the champion of love, tolerance and peace and will result in a better understanding and a deeper mutual respect between the Church and the government as well as give a boost to the devastated economy.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!!!!

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A Cradle for Jesus– in my Heart!

It's Christmas time and preparations would be in full steam, to be ready by Christmas. And one of the most important things besides sweets of course, would be the Crib and the Star. These are couple of visible signs of the Christmas season. I recall during earlier years, many parishes would host a Crib and Star competition. One could see the excitement of all those involved in the preparations of the Crib & the Star. Brainstorming sessions would be held, looking for ideas to make the Crib spectacular, something different. Some would use cardboard, some thermocol, others would use bricks or stone or mud, still others would use wood but of course, there will be one thing in common, they ensured that they was hay in the crib. There would be some lighting and a whole lot of other decoration for the crib. A great deal of effort and time, full mind & soul is put into the making of the crib to ensure that the cribs look good. Of course, everyone would hope that they would win the competition. I myself is one of those who like making a crib & Star – all out of scrap/waste items, of things found in Nature, but of course, not for the competition, though!

What does the Crib signify? It is just a piece of art or a decorative bed displayed for the public to view and appreciate? What exactly is the crib all about? Is it just another setup – the manger, the images of baby Jesus, images of Joseph & Mary, the sheep & oxen and the shepherds. The stream of running water down the hills, the lighting? All very well, but is this what a crib is all about? Is there something missing?



Melville X. D'Souza
- Orlem, Malad West

In all this excitement have we lost the real meaning of the crib? The crib or the cradle you may call it, may look so comfortable for the baby Jesus to lay down. It must have been so cozy for Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes lying there in a manger, some 2000 years ago. The question is, does Jesus want to be born there in those fancy, decorated cradles that we have prepared for him in our homes, in church compounds, at street corners? Is the spirit missing? How about making a cradle for baby Jesus, in hearts, in spirit? The pandemic may have dampened our spirit somewhat during the last Christmas when the Lockdown was in place. The pandemic has taken its toll in the subsequent months. A number of our near and dear ones have succumbed to Covid-19. Many have lost their jobs, some faced with a salary cut. There is no doubt, the pandemic has left the families of the victims com-

pletely shattered. One can imagine the trauma that they would be going through this Christmas. Where is the spirit of Christmas for them? Against this backdrop, reaching out to such families would perhaps be appropriate. Never thought of that, perhaps. The spirit of Christmas is there for all to see of course, in the cribs & stars and the Christmas Trees and other decoration all around us. The image of baby Jesus would stand out in the cribs that we would be making. But is the spirit of Christmas reigning in our hearts? The baby Jesus wants to be born in that cradle in our hearts. The baby Jesus wants to be born in the hearts of all those grieving families. Can we help create a cradle in their hearts this Christmas? That's the spirit of Christmas. All the other decorations, the beautiful cribs & stars, etc., are fine as an outward show. But, with the baby Jesus in each and everyone's heart, we can surely find the true spirit of Christmas! We can then very well go around wishing everyone a MERRY CHRISTMAS!





Christmases I Have Known

by **Bernie Tellis**

When we were in school, Christmas for us revolved round the Christmas party and the Nativity play. The greatest story ever told, never varied in the telling or in the cast. I unfailingly managed the role of one of the animals in the manger and when the audience cheered lustily, I noted with some satisfaction, that I had succeeded once again in making a perfect ass of myself. I do not recall doing anything more significant than braying at the appropriate time or chewing the cud contentedly at others, but “ Fools ! for I also had my hour “ !

Our X`mas party spirit, on the other hand, was dampened somewhat by the forbidding presence of our Class Teacher , who even though she tried to play Santa in a good cause , reassured us of her intent about as effectively as Herod did the Magi. You must remember that those were the days, long long ago, when Teachers were held in high esteem ,so we were rather shocked to see them playing the buffoon. Nowadays, not only are kids difficult to shock, but it`s impossible to have them see us teachers as anything else. Another thing about the festive season I loved, was going around carolling. We would go in a couple of school buses to the posh areas of SoBo, armed with a plentiful supply of collection boxes, discreetly kept out of sight until the second carol died on the air. Then with a sense of purpose that would have been the envy of Judas, we`d bear down upon our victims and coax them to cough up. To this day I have never understood why it was that though I have an excellent voice, I was always given the boxes .

Being under age – to our parents we

always are – we weren` t permitted to be abroad after 8 pm so the midnight Mass was a mystery to us. But in the morning ,dressed in my best hand-me-downs, my elder siblings and I , would go with Mum/Dad or the more available of the domestics to morning Mass and thereafter on a round of visits to greet our elderly relatives and sample the goodies most of which we`d already pilfered from the trays sent home by them the day before !In the evening and through the week, we`d trip to the neighbourhood churches to see the cribs and compare the display. And there was star gazing, camp fires and barbecues . For us kids, Christmas was a festival of sight, sound and taste. Its significance eluded us. I can` t say things have changed for the better over the years.

In College, the Season was associated with sports. There were tournaments to be played and trophies to be won. The star of excellence was vigorously pursued and we were overjoyed when it led us to the desired spot as were the Shepherds /Wise Men in Bethlehem. Teaching thrust me into the heart of Christmas as I endeavoured to bring home to my pre-dominantly non –Christian charges its true meaning by staging O Henry and Charles Dickens, among others , and training them to render the all time favourite carols in harmony and unison.

As the years flew by, the family scattered in India and abroad, and Christmas/New Year became an occasion to re-assemble and check up on other twigs of the family tree. There is an exchange of sad times and glad times, lean times and green times as we hark back to the Bethlehem in our lives, where it all began !

Today Christmas festivities have changed dramatically and the only part that hasn` t, is the Midnight (10 pm) Mass. Several years ago, our parish decided to inject a little more spectator interest in the proceedings. So they staged episodes from the Bible, starting from Adam and Eve losing Paradise, to the birth of Christ regaining it for us. The Mass was thereafter concelebrated in a gigantic Manger on stage. So well depicted and realistically performed that when a bedraggled man with matted hair and unkempt beard strode up the aisle ,beating his breast and shouting hoarsely, mothers grabbed hold of their terrified kids mistaking the man for the local vagabond. It was John the Baptist spewing fire and brimstone as he exhorted the multitude to “prepare ye the way of the Lord ! “ All else was drowned in the mirth of the moment. Certainly, it was the most interesting Christmas service I`ve ever attended.

At these we look forward to the little changes that do not in any way detract/distract from the essence. Many churches now have “ fellowship “ after the midnight Mass which includes the playing of Carols , meeting and greeting others over a cup of coffee and cake , to celebrate the Christ Child`s birth . Such a wonderful experience of community !

I hope this light hearted stroll through Christmases past but ever present in my memory, has helped you recall happy memories of yours, dear readers.

May you have a blessed, memorable Christmas 2021 and a peace-filled New Year 2022 .

Becoming a child with the Child

By Joy Prakash OFM

It was Saint Francis d'Assisi who popularized the custom of Christmas cribs. So before we start with the setting up of our crib-sets this year, be it at home or in some parish or religious house, it is important to recall the background and origin of crib-making. We will try to understand the emotional reasons that went into building the first crib in the 13th century, by Saint Francis and the people of Greccio, Italy. Perhaps then, our crib-making may have some semblance to the spirit with which Saint Francis originated it.

Francis had a visual temperament. We are told in the biographies that he was not a deaf hearer of the Gospel, but whatever he heard in the Gospel he diligently committed to memory and then carried it out to the letter. The Gospel account that fired Francis' imagination was this: "...the time came for her (Mary) to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7).

The Gospel account only speaks about a manger and nothing about the animals in it. Francis was a poet with an active imagination. He told his friend, a certain John, "I wish to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem and set before our bodily eyes in some way the inconveniences of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, how, with an ox and ass standing by, he lay upon the hay where he had been placed" (1Cel 84). The circumstances of this conversation had its roots at the beginning of his conversion, namely in his



restless years when he sought to know God's will regarding what he should do with his life.

To gain some clarity about his vocation, Francis went into a dilapidated church named San Damiano. When praying there, gazing at the Cross in San Damiano, Francis' eyes must have rested on the inscription, "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews" (Jn 19:19). This leads us to the Gospel of John which alone uses 'Jesus of Nazareth' while the other gospels have only 'Jesus King of the Jews'. What memories this brought to Francis – memories of the Lord's life at Nazareth, poor, hidden, hard-working.... Together with the name Nazareth, Francis recalled

the many forms of debasement of the Son of God. Nazareth probably conjured up in him the first century hymn, "...who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8).

Nazareth brought before him the image of the One who "came from the royal throne into the womb of the Virgin" (Adm 1,16). It reminded Francis of Him who descended with Mary and Joseph "and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (Lk 2:51), who

joined the sinners in the Jordan to be baptized by John (Lk 3:21); "And He was a poor man and a transient and lived on alms, He and the Blessed Virgin, and His disciples" (ER IX,5), becoming "obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8).

We know his manner of life after his conversion. Francis preferred living among the poor and the simple, among humble peasants and shepherds. It was therefore not surprising that in 1224, at the hermitage of Greccio where simplicity and humility reigned supreme, he decided to celebrate Christmas, asking a priest to celebrate mass outdoors, in front of a manger filled with hay and in the presence of an ox and an ass.

For his part, Francis preached with great sweetness about the birth of the "Infant of Bethlehem". The first biographer, Thomas of Celano says, "... when he wished to call Christ Jesus, he would call him simply the *Child of Bethlehem*, aglow with overflowing love for him; and speaking the word *Bethlehem*, his voice was more like the bleating of a sheep. His mouth was filled more with sweet affection than with words. Besides, when he spoke the name *Child of Bethlehem* or *Jesus*, his tongue licked his lips, as if it were relishing and savouring with pleased palate the sweetness of the words" (1Cel.8). He wished to make the discomforts which the child Jesus had encountered in the grotto that cold night visible to all, being without all that was needed for a new born baby.

The ox and the ass do not appear in the Gospel story, but rather in the apocryphal gospels, which are the gospel accounts that the Church never acknowledged as having been written by the four evangelists. **Francis considered the presence of these two animals essential due to their very symbolism. According to the Fathers of the Church, such as Saint Augustine, the**

ox represents the Jews and the ass represents all those people outside Judaism and the hay represents the host of salvation. Francis saw in the ox and the ass Jews and Muslims who in time would know Christ, fulfilling the providential design of the Saviour.

This was the time of the Crusades. The Saint had been in Egypt for the fifth Crusade, which had ended in disaster both for him and for the Crusade itself in 1221. Himself an eyewitness to massacre and violence, the heart of Francis' message was peace, peace as a social condition, especially peace as an interior condition. Francis exhorted his companions, "Do not envy your neighbour, do not desire his goods, and do not overpower him, but listen to him with understanding and meekness of heart." Francis followed Christ, who on the night of Christmas had come to bring peace: the Angels proclaimed in song: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on Earth to

people of goodwill."

The first biographer of Saint Francis says, "The Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of His grace, He was brought to life again through His servant Saint Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory."

"To see" and "make another see" the Most High God's coming into the world with humility and poverty in a dwelling place of animals was important in a society of merchants where money mattered more than the gratuity of God; as it was a world of clerics who were desirous of honour and power more than anything else, what would the humility of God mean to them? At such a time of violence, crusades and holy wars, there was nothing they needed to see more urgently than the tenderness of God made manifest in the babe of Bethlehem, a challenge to every believer to let the child within manifest itself as a herald of the great King!

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A Different CHRISTMAS 2021



by Don Aguiar.

This Christmas is different. This Christmas is not about whether my house is sparkling clean, it is not about whether I have prepared a variety of sweets, it is not about whether I have that perfect ethnic attire and jewelry for the occasion, it is not about a bucketful of bucks I would be spending on shopping and partying, it is not about having a grand vacation at an exotic location, it is not even about whether I got a promotion or a raise...

This Christmas is not about how principles have been modified in favour of money; nations sold for money; votes sold for money; honour sold for money; families split for money; friends separated for money; people killed for money; and ourselves being made slaves for money!!!

This Christmas is not about the Philosophy of life – Those that are crooked will be left alone. Those that are straight are hammered. Ironic of the people of India.

This Christmas is more about Survival. It is about being grateful that we are still able to breathe and alive for this day. It is about being thankful for the love and care from our loved ones, It about being with the family under one roof and spending time together, It is about lighting a candle for all those dear and near souls who left us, It is about extending support and spreading cheer to family and friends who have lost their people...It is about spreading happiness to those who have suffered losses in jobs and businesses...

This Christmas is more about MODERATION which is the mantra. As many people including a few celebrities, who were in their 40s died because of doing too much to be fit. Unfortunately they only looked fit, six packs and all. Any extreme of zero or 100 is not correct. A moderate amount of exercise, just about 20mins, eating everything, no detoxification or keto moto diets, just eat what your ancestors have been eating, the local and

seasonal food in your hometown, not kale, kiwi or olive oil..., but in small quantities, sleeping a full 7 hours, respecting your body by not feeding it steroids, performance enhancement drugs are all that you need to do.

This Christmas is more about asking, why is it that human rights have become so significant in today's world? What in fact do human rights mean at the ground level?

In earlier times, societies bound themselves to codes of ethical behaviour based largely on religious scriptures. Most countries in fact were confessional or theocratic states. But as societies grow increasingly pluralistic and secularized, it is vital to find a basis for the ethical treatment of both individuals and groups which is acceptable to all. The dignity of the human person is one such basis. Human rights therefore have taken their place today as the foundation for the right treatment of all human beings, irrespective of gender, religion, race or class. There's another reason for this: human rights are the practical implementation of all

that democracy stands for. When we think of democracy, we usually think of free elections, a political connotation. But beyond the narrowly political, societies are also judged on their socio-economic values, on the religious space they offer, on the opportunities for material and spiritual growth given to their members solely because they are fellow human beings.

This Christmas is more about understanding the reason of God's human creation that every person, whether man or woman, is born of a father and of a mother. Half of his being is contributed by man and half by woman, so everybody is both. If you are a man, then the man is on top and underneath it, hidden, are all the feminine qualities, the contribution of your mother. If you are a woman, then your feminine qualities are on top and your male qualities are underneath it; that is the contribution of your father. And there is no need of any conflict between you, because you are man and woman together, simultaneously. Rather than creating a conflict the need is to indicate to you the path, how you can create an orchestra of all your qualities together. That will be your wholeness as a human being. To save our planet earth before it is too late....

This Christmas is more about the homes that didn't put up the Christmas tree and Crib this year, where sweets have lost their taste for all.... Where the loss suffered at the start of the year is now making every occasion feel small. We know that it may be too soon to be happy, but we hope to find happiness again soon.

This Christmas is more about having a "re-routing" moment or helping someone else have one.

Have you noticed how Google Maps never yells at you if you take the wrong turn? It never raises its voice and says, "You were supposed to go LEFT at the last crossing, you idiot! Now you're going to have to go the LONG way around

Mysterious star of Bethlehem

Mathew's biblical narrative of the birth of Jesus mentions two sightings of the star of Bethlehem---one before the wise men from the East began their journey to Jerusalem probably from Babylonia or Persia, and the other after their meeting with king Herod. "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to honour Him". These were the words spoken by the wise men who came in search of the baby Jesus (Mat. 2:2). Mathew then goes on to tell us in (Mat 2: 9-11) that "when the wise men heard the king, they departed and behold the star which they had seen in the East, went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star again, they rejoiced. They went into the house and when they saw the child with Mary his mother, they knelt down and worshipped him". Many stories have been woven around this celestial phenomenon of unique occurrence which scientists have been battling to offer a satisfactory explanation. While some attribute it to be a natural astronomical event, some others have attributed it to be



BY A. F. NAZARETH

'Haley's comet' which was visible in the years 12BC and 11BC and other planetary conjunctions that took place within 10 years of Christ's birth. Unfortunately, even computer related replays of the history of the universe have failed to carry enough conviction. So much for science and its discoveries. , ,

This is true Christian revelation which even after 2000 years of the star's appearance in the Eastern hemisphere the mystery surrounding it continues to remain unanswered and unchallenged. The symbolic star still continues to adorn Christian churches, cribs the world over. It is also prominently displayed in most Christian homes, public avenues, and street corners, to celebrate the great event and miracle wrought by God, to herald the birth of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. It has become a symbol of joy and enlightenment to all Christians every Christmas, culminating in the feast of the Epiphany, popularly known as the feast of the 'Three kings' on Jan 6.

A Merry Christmas to all.

and it's going to take you SO much more time, and you're going to be late for your meeting! Learn to pay attention and listen to instructions, OK??"

IF it did that, chances are, a lot of us might stop using it. But Google maps never condemns or castigates. It simply re-routes and shows you the next best way to get there. Its primary interest is in getting you to reach your goal, not in making you feel bad for having made a mistake.

There's a lesson for everyone there. It's tempting to unload our frustration and anger on those who have made a mistake, especially those we are close to, & familiar with. But wise mentors and

guides fix the problem, not the blame.

This Christmas is more about being hopeful, for a healthy & happy tomorrow, let us be with and to belong to one another, finding more and more ways of bringing hope where there is discord and division, during this time of pandemic. Only through a greater awareness among us that we are all part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another and that we have a shared responsibility for one another and for the planet, which is our common home, can we attempt to lift us out of despair of any kind.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!!!!

John 3:16 and the homeless boy

In the city of Chicago, one cold, dark wintry night, a blizzard was setting in. A little boy was selling newspapers on the corner of the street. The people were in and out of the cold. The little boy was so cold that he wasn't trying to sell many papers.

He walked up to a policeman and said, "Sir, you wouldn't happen to know where a poor boy could find a warm place to sleep tonight, would you? You see, I sleep in a box up around the corner there and down the alley and it's awful cold in there for tonight. Sure, it would be nice to have a warm place to stay."

The policeman looked down at the little boy and said, "You go down the street to that big white house and knock on the door. When they come out of the door, you just say, 'John 3:16' and they will let you in."

So the boy went to the house, walked up the steps, and knocked on the door, and a lady answered. He looked up and said, "John 3:16."

The lady said, "Come on in, son."

She took him in and made him sit down in a split bottom rocker in front of a big old fireplace.

The boy sat there for a while and

thought to himself: "John 3:16.....I don't understand it, but it sure makes a cold boy warm."

A few minutes later, she asked the boy, "Are you hungry?"

He replied, "Well, I am, but just a little. I haven't eaten for a couple of days and I guess I could stand a little bit of food."

The lady took him in the kitchen and gave him some nice delicious food to eat.

He ate and ate until he couldn't eat any more. Then he thought to himself: "John 3:16.....I sure don't understand it, but it surely makes a hungry boy full."



by Jubel D'Cruz

The lady took the boy upstairs to a bathroom to a huge bathtub filled with warm water and he sat there and soaked himself for a while. As he soaked, he thought to himself: "John 3:16.....I sure don't understand it, but it surely does make a dirty boy clean."

"You know, I've not had a real bath in my whole life," he told the lady. "The only bath I ever had was when I stood in front of that big old fire hydrant as they flushed it out."

The lady then took him to another



room, tucked him into a big old feather bed, pulled the covers up around his neck, kissed him goodnight and turned out the lights.

As he lay in the darkness and looked out of the window at the snow coming down on that cold frosty night, he thought to himself: "John 3:16....I don't understand it, but it sure makes a tired boy rested."

The next morning, the lady came back and took him down again to that same table full of food. After he had his fill, she took him down again to that same big old split bottom rocker in front of the fireplace and picked up an old Bible. She sat down in front of him and looked into his young face.

"Do you understand John 3:16?" she asked him gently.

"No ma'am," he replied. "I don't. The first time I ever heard it was last night when the policeman told me to use it."

She opened the Bible to the book of John chapter 3, verse 16 and began to explain it to him. It was all about the love of Jesus Christ --- "For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

And right there in front of that big old fireplace, the boy gave his heart and life to Jesus. He sat there and thought: "John 3:16. I don't understand it, but it surely makes a lost boy feel safe."

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What does Christmas really Signify

by **Albert C deSouza**

I am writing this article at the beginning of Dec 2021. In three weeks time (a little more) we Christians will be celebrating Christmas on the 25 th Dec. As the day approaches THE EXCITEMENT GROWS .All families are preparing both spiritually and materially to be in the proper state and mood respectively for Christmas. There is general spring cleaning of the houses where Christians reside and perhaps with repairs and painting of the building or sprucing up the interiors, particularly if it has not been done for many years. Perhaps a son or daughter or other family members are coming Home For Christmas from abroad or some other places in India and so there must be unmistakable signs of welcome. The Mumbaikar has to show his relatives or friends that he and the family are happy to have their company for Christmas.

The Christmas atmosphere is invoked by playing of Christmas Carols or relevant Yuletide music. There is vast choice today on the internet with famous maestros like Andre Rieu besides artistes sopranos and tenors. Don't get confused by the very wide choice. Work will be going on assisted by visitors. Making of sweets is one major area .There is a lot of laughter, jokes, merriment and tomfoolery going on all the while .There are always experts in the home on cooking, sweet making , gourmet dishes both local and European .The husband aided by other men takes charge of the liquor and you can bet there will be adequate stocks of popular brands. Prestige is involved for availability of food and drinks and the family name must be maintained. Spirits will be boosted not only by pouring spirits down one's throat but but also being praised for a good table and bar.. There will be individuals and helpers to look after decorations, Christmas tree, The Crib etc etc. The lady of the House will oversee all arrangements and see

that nothing is left out or is out of place.

If one wants to sample the spirit of Christmas in any Christian locality in Mumbai go to the main road or market place. In Bandra it is Hill Road. There is a big stretch which is lit up by stars, lanterns, strings of colored lights etc giving the place a look like fairyland. You can't miss it. There are crowds shopping for clothes, sweets , spices, cakes, decorations and whatever. The festive air is catchy. Also a necessary feature is Santa Claus in his red and white outfit. He is the star attraction for children.

On Christmas Eve in most families some adults and older children would be dressing up for the main Mass either open air or in large churches. Everyone is dressed to her or his or best and also wearing a signature perfume. The pews in the pandals or church are often redolent with classy fragrances. Intruding on the scene sometimes are whiffs of country liquor. Many men down a quick one before making it to the pandal or church.! Let us admit that The Church or outdoor venue for Christmas is a fashion parade and being human we get distracted often. Even old men! Not everyone comes to church early to hear the carol singing.

Christmas Lunch or Dinner or both are major subjects themselves. It will suffice to say that most of us eat and drink to satiety .Why shouldn't we .It is the Lord's Birthday. I believe for most families Christmas Lunch is the piece de resistance of the season. Among senior lady visitors some will be introduced to new dishes they are tasting for the first time. Enquiries about the ingredients and manner of cooking are made and noted. These dishes will be introduced to the home crowd at the first opportunity. A feather in her culinary cap.

.The purpose of all the hectic preparation and celebration at Christmas and what we are likely to forget is why we are so joyful at the coming of Jesus

into the world. It because it is a great event and justifies the humungous preparation that goes before it and after also. It is the feast the Incarnation of God .He takes the form of human flesh and is here for starting, working out and finally completing the task of Redemption of Mankind so that humans become eligible for heaven. It all starts with the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. Christ was in all humility born in a stable and threw In His lot with the common folk. Hence we who have plenty must remember the poor. This is the time of the year to share what we have with the not so well off and give unreservedly to them without making them feel obligated. Various organizations in parishes make children (and adults) happy by organizing lunches, tea parties, sports Christmas trees etc for different age groups of children. If it is not already happening we should get down to it. You will enjoy Christmas only when you share with the not so well off what you have in abundance. Maybe you should stretch the generosity and make a sacrifice of a little deprivation. We must experience what it means to do with a little less. We must remember the poor often go to bed hungry! Christmas becomes meaningful only when we share! If someone intends turning over to a new lease of life with new resolutions for living motivated by the Christmas spirit now is the time to start. Don't wait for The New Year! Let the New Man emerge at Christmas.

Christmas is the time when all stops are pulled out for dressing, eating, drinking, music, dances, food , companionship, friendship, romancing etc etc. These will become memories for times when we are old and tell our children or grandchildren of our social exploits .Remember God gave us memories that we may have Roses in December, Christmas Roses!

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

Advent Notes

We are Advent People and Maranatha is our Song. Maranatha means Come Lord Jesus. Season of Advent is the Season of Walking with our God again. God who come and People who wait is the grammar of the Season.

Yesterday Jesus has come in our History; Today Jesus come to us in the Eucharistic Mystery and Tomorrow He will come to us in the fullness of Time in our Eternity.

Here is the Acronym for the term Advent – which gives us the outlines of Advent Season. A – Alert to God's Word. D – Discern the Ways of God. V – Venerate the Advent Saints. E – Embrace the Spirit of the Season: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. N – Neighborly Charity and Works of Mercy. T – Turning to God and Turning Away from Ego-Centric Attitudes.

Alert to God's Word:

Language of the World (Cosmos) is Noise and the Language of the Word of

God (Logos) is silence. To listen to the Word of God one needs total silence: silence of the senses, silence of the reason, silence of judgements. Listening in faith silence is the right way to welcome the Word of God amidst us. The traditional method of welcoming the Word of God is known as Lectio Divina with four fold strategies: Lectio (Reading), Oratio (Praying), Meditatio (Meditation) and Contemplatio (Contemplation). This is the surer way to make the Word of our Mother Tongue. Mother Mary welcome the Word of God whole-heartedly and Whole-mindedly thus She became the Mother of the Saviour, Mother of the Emmanuel – God-with-Us.

Discern the Ways of God:

Thoughts of God are different from our thoughts, Words of the World are different from the Word of God and Deeds of the World are different from the Deeds of God. Therefore discernment is necessary for a Purpose-driven living. We ought wear a moral watch in our person. Watch your words; Watch your actions; Watch your Thoughts; Watch your Charater; Watch your Heart. This Watchfulness clears the way to discern the Way of God

Venerate the Advent Saints:

Advent people are not lonely people. We are the pilgrims of the Advent Season – We are walking with God again one more time. There is Advent Prophet Isaiah with his prophetic exhortations; there is the Precursor John the Baptist preparing us the Way of the Lord; There is the Mother of Advent Season Mother Mary greeting us with Baby Jesus. There is Saint Joseph the faithful Guardian of the Mother Mary. There are a few Advent Saints like Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Ambrose, Saint John of the Cross who greet us on our Advent Journey.



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

Embrace the Spirit of the Season:

The Spirit of Advent heralds Hope, Peace, Joy and Love for our lives. Word of God enlightens with the Message of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. As the hearers of Word we are given the grace to read the Word of God with gift of Spiritual Intelligence. The term Intelligence in Latin means intus-leggere which means to read the word from within. The Holy Spirit gifts us to read the Word of God from within so that it would grace our surrounding without.

Neighborly Charity and Works of Mercy:

God as Immanuel – God-with-Us has become our perfect neighbor during



the Christmas time. As God has shared the divinity with our humanity, we are called to share our humanity with fellow-brethren and that his safer way for us to become divine. Neighborly Charity and works of Mercy is the mode of networking among the poor amidst us. They are our benefactors before God. More we encounter the less fortunate brothers and Sisters of the Lord via works of mercy and compassion more we encounter the God who comes in our lives.

Turning to God and Turning away Ego-Centric Attitude.

Ego is the Enemy and Spirit is our most valued friend. Theology of Christmas is best on Kenosis. It is the Self-emptying of the Son of God – the servant of Yahweh emptying himself even death on the Cross (Phil 2: 5-11). These are three modes of becoming one with God: Kenosis, Theosis and Entheosis. Kenosis is the total emptying of Ego, Theosis is the invitation from God to share his Nature and Entheosis we are in union with God with the Nature of God. Advent Season is the Season of Turning way from Our Ego-Centric Attitudes and turning to our God comes.

Christmas Notes

Fr. George Olivera, Bangalore

Theology of Self-Emptying

Christmas story begins in the Mind of God. It is the plan of God to redeem the humanity from Sin, Law and Death. It is the downward mobility - God becoming man and to live among us. First man Adam excelled in the language of self-pride but the Second Adam excelled in the language of Humility by taking the human form and voluntarily wearing the garments of a Servant and willing to die on the Cross. Theology of Christmas is the Theo-drama of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit: so Christmas is the Gift of Abba Father, Obedience of the Son and the Comfort of the Holy Spirit. Saint John in the prologue makes a saddening remark: He came among his own and his own received him not (Jn 1:10). The Voices of the World are just opposed to the Voice of God. This is a quote on the voices of the World: Appetite says, "Be sensuous, enjoy yourself." Education says, "Be resourceful, expand yourself." Materialism says, "Be satisfied, please yourself." Psychology says, "Be confident, fulfill yourself." Pride says, "Be superior, promote yourself." Humanism says, "Be capable believe in yourself." God says, "Be wise, humble yourself."

Ecology of Dwelling:

"He came among his own and dwelt amidst us" thus records Gospel of Infancy narratives. During Christmas time we celebrate the inter-connectivity of our dwellings. Christmas Crib is the Perfect Symbol of Global Inter-connectivity. Divinity is connected to our humanity. Heaven is connected to our Mother Earth. Royalty of the Magi greets the Simplicity of the Shepherds. Animal world greets the terrain of the greenery of Mother Nature. Ik-kyu says: Everyday, devotee minutely examine the Law an endlessly chant complicated sutras. Before doing that,

though, they should learn how to read the love letters sent by the wind and rain, the snow and moon.

Psychology of Welcome:

During the Christmastide God has become our neighbor and welcoming the God the neighbor is the sacred duty of you and me.

St Benedict says that we are to see Christ in the guest. Like Abraham in Genesis chapter 18, we might be welcoming angels, the very messengers of God, in offering hospitality to others.

A wealthy Christian businessman treated a poor old man in his compartment with rudeness and disdain as they travelled together on a train on a long distance trip. When they arrived at their common destination, the businessman found the station thronged with pious Christians waiting in ecstatic joy to greet the arrival of one of the holiest priests in Europe and learnt to his dismay that the old man in his compartment was the saintly priest. Embarrassed at his disgraceful behaviour and distraught that he missed a golden opportunity to speak in privacy to a wise and holy man, the businessman pushed his way through the crowd to find the old man. When he reached him, he begged the priest's forgiveness and requested his blessing. The old priest looked at him and said, "To receive forgiveness, you must go out and beg it from every poor old person in the world.

Technology of Celebrations:

Here's a Prayer before the use of Technology: Please grant me the Serenity to accept technology I have courage to use it mindfully, and the wisdom to know when to turn it off.

Susan Fourtané chronicles the Technology factor of our Christmas celebrations: In the 19th century, Christmas was hardly celebrated. It was not be-

fore the end of the century that it became an annual celebration that started to spread around the world. Since then, transformation, adaptation, and the influence of important technological advancements have reshaped the Christian Season.

A brief account of the main technological advancements from 1840 up to the present: 1840 was a significant year in technological advancements. It marked the end of the mechanical age, which is known to have started in 1450. It also marked the beginning of the electromechanical era, which continued until 1940. The telegraph was created in the early 1800s. Samuel Morse's Morse Code was created in 1835. The telephone, invented by Alexander Graham Bell, was created in 1876.

And finally, the first radio developed by Guglielmo Marconi was created in 1894. Thomas Edison invented the bulb also in this era, and the railways got modernized with the coming of the electric trains.

Around 1940, the first large-scale automatic digital computer in the United States was the Mark 1, created by Harvard University. In the electronic era, the time between 1940 and right now, the personal computer was developed by Apple Inc., the Apple II.

The World Wide Web (www) was invented in 1991 by computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee; this is what we still use when we open a browser.

All these technological advancements influenced and changed the way people have celebrated Christmas. However, it was the Internet what really changed everything at a much bigger scale. The Internet not only has changed Christmas but has also changed the way we gift, celebrate, and interact with each other during the holiday season.

A Terrifying Moment At Christmas Mass

Short Story

The dark winter sky threw a blanket of cold swirling winds across the countryside. Naked trees and scattered hutments 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 THE COALMINERS**, was his topic.



BY MELVYN BROWN

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 heartwarming 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 them. It was a 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 branch from a '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 chocolate cake 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 for 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," smiled the parish priest, "it was not a bomb".

A Different Christmas



-Deanne Aguiar-Pereira

After a year of battling losses, families are anxious to get together during the Christmas season.

I begin asking this question, "What does Christmas mean?" Perhaps we should have begun with this question because Christmas seems to mean so many things to so many people.

IF Christmas means family; THEN what does Christmas mean to a person who has just lost a loved one or has no family?

After the rough year that 2020 has been, we are all looking forward to the most wonderful time of the year when people across the world come together to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25.

Each year families get together; some visit their friends and indulge in memorable parties to celebrate the festive season.

Decorated Christmas trees are everywhere you look. Presents crowd for space under the tree and families come together for a feast. You know Christmas is coming.



by Deanne Aguiar

Christmas is a time of joy and warmth, surrounded with the love of family members and the comradery of friends. Over the years, it is has become much more than just the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth; now it is seen to embody the spirit of giving and affection that one carries along with them for the rest of the year and is also celebrated by people across faiths.

Christmas is a time of spiritual reflection on the important foundations of the Christian faith. It's also a celebration. It's when Christians celebrate God's love for the world through the birth of the Christ child: Jesus Christ.

We know that through the belief in Jesus Christ we are daughters and sons of God. Heaven will one day be our home.

Even with the ongoing pandemic and the new strains threatening another lockdown, the festival of Christmas brings joy and hopefulness along with it. The celebrations might have to be kept at a minimum and large gatherings may seem next to impossible but these difficulties can scarcely dampen the spirit of the festive season.

Wishing everyone a Holy Joly Christmas.

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Ageing Gracefully

Every life has its beginning, its growth, and its end. As said in Ecclesiastes, there is a time for every matter under heaven; a time to be born and a time to die. This applies to our life too. We grow old. Growing is a passive state where we sit back and let life happen to us. But there is a view that there is a difference between "ageing" and "growing old". Ageing is an active state - it is a process by which one becomes somebody more real and alive. It is more spiritual and cultural; it requires attention and participation. It is saying "yes" to life's invitations. Here one knows the signs of ageing and so there is no regret, no excuse and no running away. It is a state of mind; it is a decision.

Whether one is working at a job or engaged in any other occupation, when he / she reaches the age of 50 or around, the transition should begin. We should start thinking about life after "work" or to be more clear "after retirement" and how we will continue to grow to fullness— that is to become a fully formed individual. This is accomplished not through a facelift, but a personality lift. Everyone has the flicker of youth inside them and that youthfulness has to be well tamed and developed. In other words, it means a



soft suppression of things older and traditional and letting the youthful attributes of energy and ideas come to the forefront. Thus we keep moving, unfolding our deep potential, loving life more and facing old age prepared and ready for more of the same. There may be many thought provoking areas and they have to be sifted considering our tastes and suitability.

Everyone reaches an age where we have to embrace our mortality, recognising it as a rise to our eternity. Whatever be the age, such a sobering thought is really liberating. We are told by St Paul, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's". I have reached that age when I must grow into an intimacy with God. My prayer liberates my attachment to many earthly things. I am an Auditor, emeritus, retired from papers searching others' faults and irregularities that cost the nation. I have been moulded accordingly and behaving with that analytical mind. I remember my wife warning me to stop behaving like Auditor at home when I questioned children for any wrong committed by them. I have definitely learned new ways without forgetting my auditing tendencies. We start recognising our limitations and reconcile

with the fact we have to depend on others. Losing the spouse is a great sadness and a point of change. Sometimes we may feel excluded or rejected by the world where productivity is everything. We are a sort of deadwood incapable of undertaking any responsibility.

This is the time we have to remember the Word "blessed are the poor". It applies to all whom age has stripped of physical strength, of memory, of independence. We have to place all our confidence in the Almighty as the death nears. St. John Paul II tells us, "These are years to be lived with a sense of trusting abandonment into the hands of God, our provident and merciful Father. It is time to be used creatively for deepening our spiritual life through more fervent prayer and commitment to the service of our brethren in charity. This is the age we have to cling to Christ, just as the branches cling to the vine." No matter our age or our frailties, all that matters is our yes to the love of God in the here and now. Will realisation of these facts at an early age make young persons spiritually better, stronger and mature? I am not sure, but it may be only good.

—K. C. Thomas
Navi Mumbai

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Prop. B. D'Souza

The Way Of The Word For Christmas

By Melvyn Brown

Mary of Nazareth went as quickly as possible to the hill country's town in Judah, to meet her cousin Elizabeth. On her arrival at Zachariah's home she was greeted twice by Elizabeth. The elderly woman blesses Mary and the fruit of her womb. This was how it had to be – it was the way of the Word, in preparation for Advent and the celebration of Christmas.

From the start of eternity when the darkness saw the Spirit of God move over the waters, the Word was with God and the Word was God.

“All things were made through him and without him nothing came to be. Whatever has come to be, ‘found life in him; life, which for human beings, was also light, light that shines in darkness, light that darkness could not overcome....” (Jn.1:3-5).

The Word created all things, the earth, stars, sun, moon, the galaxies, inner and outer space, the creation of human beings, the life of Christ. Generations of prophets wrote in the Torah to the point of John the Baptist, who was the last prophet of the Old Covenant.

Mary, the young woman of Nazareth had been chosen from the beginning of eternity, pre-ordained to also be ‘the Mother of the Jewish Messiah’ created ‘immaculate and divine’, she was to be the temple of Christ and Mother of the Church.

The way of the Word was a mystical act to manifest His humanity, through the welcome celebration of Christmas with devotions, prayers and meditation; the event would reach out to confront



and connect with sinful people, giving them the gift of His love and forgiveness, when they repent for their wicked deeds. The Baptist would be the instrument to clear His path, and draw their attention to Christ, Son of the Word, born to be the redeemer and the light.

The four weeks of Advent leads us to the home of Zachariah when his tongue is set free, when he praises God with biblical phrases and biblical promises in thanksgiving. He calls his son a prophet who will pave the path for Jesus. Like the Baptist, we too become prophets in the service of God who is the Word, the Holy Spirit and Messiah. (Lk.1:67-79).

The way of the Word is found in the actions we discover in the liturgy, homily and devotions which spread across yuletide as ordained by the Lord, as a gift at Christmas. His presence as both divine and human celebrates the New Covenant “in His love”.

Almost two days before the Christ ar-

rived, the promised child (John the Baptist) was born to the old Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth. All his neighbors rejoiced in this special moment in time. “The Lord has shown her so great a kindness”. Elizabeth decided to keep the name for her son which her husband wrote on a writing-tablet. The child's name would be ‘John’. (Lk.1:57-66).

Why did God become Man, the creature He had made?

Theologians in the past had no proper answer and there were many disputes; for many had no scriptural support.

Eventually, years later the Bible provided the answer in the Gospel of John 3:16. The incarnation had an answer in God's love for humanity – to free men from sin and punishment and give them hope of salvation. “For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Son that whosoever believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life” (Jn.3:16).

The Lord coming down as man was to state that salvation is universal. It is the way of the WORD.

We are the sowers who sow the Word (Mk.4:14) The apostle John in his Gospel wrote: “And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we have seen his glory, the glory of the Only Son of the Father.(Jn.1:14).

“Let the Word of God dwell in you, in all its richness” (Col.3:16) this Christmas and always.

Marital Happiness

by K. Hans, Navi Mumbai

We hear that in the supposedly advanced countries half or more of all marriages end in separation or divorce. The statistics on the subject in our country is not available, but from the media and religious organisations we learn that there is a remarkable number of divorces. The husband and wife suffer immediate disappointment, sometimes long-term depression and children are emotionally scarred for years.

When there is divorce, each often blames the other for their break-up. "It is not my fault; she never wants to do a thing as I like to do or opine" Or, "He is a difficult person; very stubborn and not caring for other's feelings" Often there are hidden differences, but they are ignored or suppressed. Should marriage end this way, in the childish and immature way? - in the earthly business way. .? But marriage does not have to end this way - as the couple have willingly selected a route for their journey. When a journey has a destination, the importance must be given to the joyous journey to the destination.

One can make the marriage happy by choosing to do so. One has to make the right choice, to lead a smooth and joyful life. Our life experiences are directly related to the decisions we make daily. The right choice in married life is the choice decided in mutual consultation to love unconditionally in all circumstances, to lead the life joyfully, to bring up children in the best way, and to submit to the Will of God in joy and peace.

The major factor in marital happiness is belief in God, belief in the Word of

God. Happy marriage appears to be directly related to how much a husband and wife allow God into their relationship. Since God is the one who instituted the marriage, it makes sense that He is the one who holds the key to a happy marriage.

How marriage began? "Then Yehweh caused a deep sleep to come over the man and he fell asleep. He took one of his ribs and filled its place with flesh. The rib was formed into a woman and brought her to the man. The man then said "Now this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken from man" Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh". Gen 2:22-23



Human nature being shortsighted and always wanting to please itself, naturally opts for the quick fix. Many men and women separate because of overly indulgent selfishness. By choosing not to be selfish, by choosing to sacrifice some of the desires and to suppress the ego, one can literally choose to make the marriage happier. God gives us freedom of choice - he tells us "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" Deuteronomy 30:9. However the divorce record shows that we are not very good at making right choices. The spouses must be very careful to make unselfish choices. Selfishness brings bad results and unselfishness brings

good results.

good results.

The man and wife during the course of life have various types of experiences that they have encountered. As one who has spent forty four years of togetherness, I find that happiness comes from real love of the other person; once there is the faith that the spouse is a valuable gift from God, the desire to cherish that relationship eternally will work. In spite of our good decisions and resolutions, sometimes ego and selfishness can play havoc. Extra care, extra reliance on God in prayer will stimulate good thoughts and the difficulty can be overcome.



overcome.

1. There is a need for mutual submission. Peter advises husbands to dwell with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life 1 Peter 3:7
2. Accepting the spouse, respecting his/her individuality". It is not possible and not advisable to change a person according to another's calculations.
3. The most important choice is to place God first in the lives. It is not two getting married. It is three getting married. The marriage Covenant is made with one's spouse and with God. God expects married couples to remain dedicated to each other through Him. So the couple must remain privately committed in mind and heart to God and His laws and principles. Putting God first assures that a husband and wife put each other ahead of themselves in their marital relationship. When we want God as guide, He will give us happiness and security.

Choose this day to serve the spouse as never before, and you will find joy and peace that passes all human understanding. Marital happiness is family happiness, then societal happiness and the happiness in the land.

CHRISTMAS Cures!

Dr. Trevor Colaso

The dutiful shepherds were keeping their evening watch over their flock of sheep, when the Angel announced the Good News of the birth of The Savior, the Messiah (Luke 2:8-14).

This joyful event is majestically celebrated by Christians in the form of Santa Claus or Abba-Father, "Who loved the world so much, that He gave His only Son; that whosoever believes in Him may not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). So wish you a "Merry Christmas"! And may you be spiritually righteous!

Pope Francis on 05 December 2019 at the Vatican succulently expressed: "As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of God Who became man! We come to realize that so great is His love that He became one of us, so that we might become one with Him!"

Christmas or 'MASS of Christ', is derived from the concluding word of any Mass – "Ite Missa est" - Go the dismissal is made! Below are New Testament verses to rekindle the Biblical meaning of 'CHRISTMAS'!

C – Cornerstone: Have you not read the Scripture, the stone which the builders rejected has become the 'chief cornerstone'! This was the Lord's doing and is a marvelous sight! // Behold! I am laying in Zion a 'cornerstone', chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame. // Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ is the 'cornerstone'! In Him the whole structure is joined together, and grows into a holy Temple, a dwelling place for God and man (*Matthew 21:42 // 1 Peter 2:6 // Ephesians 2: 20-22*).

H – Hope: We have this 'hope' which

is the sure and steadfast anchor for the soul; a 'hope' where Jesus a Forerunner on our behalf has entered, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedak // We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love you have for all the saints – the 'hope' which is the Word of Truth and the Gospel which God chose for the Gentiles the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the 'hope' of glory (*Hebrews 6:19-20 // Colossians 1:4-5; 26-27*).

R – Redemption: Anna came, praised God and spoke about the Child to all who were looking for the 'redemption' of Jerusalem // All have sinned and fall short of God's glory. But they are now justified by His grace as a gift through the 'redemption' in Christ Jesus, Whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement // God is the Source of your life in Christ Jesus, Who became for us the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and the 'redemption'! (*Luke 2:38 // Romans 3:23-25 // 1 Corinthians 1:30-31*).

I – Immanuel: This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall name Him 'Immanuel' - God with us (*Matthew 1:23*).

S – Savior: Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in 'God my Savior' // Zechariah filled with the Holy Spirit spoke, 'God has raised up a 'mighty Savior' (a horn of salvation) for us in the house of his servant David' / I bring you tidings of great joy for all the people – to you is born in the city of David a 'Savior' Who is the Messiah the Lord! / You will find a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger // We testify that the Father has sent His Son as the 'Savior' of the world (*Luke 1:47/ 69 / 2: 10-12 // 1 John 4:14*).



T – Temple: The 'Temple' in the city is the 'Temple' of the Lord God the Almighty and of the Lamb! The city has no need of the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and the lamp is the Lamb! (*Revelation 21: 22-23*).

M – Mediator: There is one God and 'one Mediator' between God and man, Christ Jesus Who gave Himself as a ransom for all. I (Paul) was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher for the Gentiles // Christ is the 'Mediator of the new covenant' so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance; and to the sprinkled Blood that is better than the blood of Abel (*1 Timothy 2:57 // Hebrews 9:15; 12:24*).

A – Abundance: The thief comes only to steal, kill and to destroy. But I have come that you may have life, and have it in 'abundance'! // God is able to provide you with every blessing in 'abundance', so that having enough of everything, you may share 'abundantly' in every good work (*John 10:10 // 2 Corinthians 9:8*).

S – Sacrifice: Be imitators of God beloved children. Live in love just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and a 'sacrifice to God' // So I appeal to you by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a 'living sacrifice', holy and acceptable, which indeed is your spiritual worship (*Ephesians 5:1-2 // Romans 12:1*).

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New Year: A time for a new beginning

New Year's Day is the oldest of all holidays. About 4000 years ago, the Babylonians celebration lasted for eleven days. New Year's day according to the Gregorian calendar (January 1) is one of the most popular occasions in India. Many people throughout the world celebrate this festive occasion with their loved ones or in large gatherings. Exchanging messages, greeting cards and gifts are a part and parcel of the New Year celebration. The media too covers many New Year events which are showcased on prime channels for most of the day. People who decide to stay indoors resort to these New Year shows for entertainment and fun. The age-old tradition of planning new resolutions for the coming year is a common sight among children and adults.

India is a land of various communities and each community celebrates its New Year in a different way. In Maharashtra, it is celebrated on the first day of Chaitra. The day is called 'Gudi Padva' by the Maharashtrian community.

On this day, people get up early in the morning and wear traditional clothes. Outside the house or on the verandahs or balconies, the Gudi is put up. It is a long pole which is covered on the top with a silk cloth. A small garland of mango leaves is placed on it and a silver, copper or brass pot is inverted over it. Tamilians celebrate their New Year on April 13. It is called 'Vashaparapu' by the TAMILIAN community, meaning beginning of the year. Some Tamilians follow the tradition of keeping a mirror and a plate of sweets, fruits and money before the image of their God whom they worship.

Gujaratis celebrate their New Year by visiting friends and relatives and taking their blessings on the day following Diwali. Muslims celebrate their New Year before the start of the Islamic year. The Parsis celebrate their New Year which is

known as Pateti in August with prayers, greetings and giving away of alms to the poor. The Bengalis celebrate their New Year on the first day of Vaisakh, the month following Chaitra, which is considered the first month of the year by many Hindus. Christians celebrate their New Year on January 1 with a lot of merriment.

New Year celebrations are also popular in other parts of the world and each community keeps celebrating it in one way or the other.

In some places, a figure resembling an old man is made. The figure signifies all that should be dispensed with, such as evil thoughts, bad behaviour, and so on. The figure stands on a road or in lanes and passersby often drop money into the box that is kept beside it. The effigy is set on fire at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. The burning of the effigy signifies the end of the old year and the beginning of a new one. The money collected is used for partying by the people who have made the effigy.

Most of us have forgotten that the New Year is not only a time for revelry but also for reflection.



by Jubel D'Cruz

New Year is a time to celebrate the start of something new. It is a time to make new promises, some to be broken, 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 an occasion to start new friendships and request for forgiveness from your enemies. New Year is a joyous time because we feel like we get to start all over again. On New Year's Day, people are happy, laughing, giggling and sharing about events of the past year and those before.

Metanoein & Eucharistia!

Pope Francis in his apostolic visit to Greece reflected on St. John the Baptist's call for conversion – "a voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Luke 3:4). He said this at a homily during Mass at Athens on Sunday 05 December 2021:

"In our lives there will always be times when we feel that we are in the midst of a desert! Yet, it is precisely there that the Lord makes His presence felt. Let us ask for the grace to believe that God would banish our fears, heal our wounds, and turn our arid places into springs of water! Also, let us ask for the grace of hope to revive our faith which rekindles our charity, of which the deserts of today's world are thirsting!"

"Metanoein: Here your beautiful Greek language reminds us of the etymology of the verb, 'to convert', which is composed of 'meta' meaning to 'go beyond'; and the verb 'noein', to 'think beyond' – our habitual worldview and instincts. For in reality God is greater!"

"Eucharistia: This Greek word sums up the gift of Jesus Christ, which means 'thanksgiving' – a word for the sacred Host, the Eucharist! (cf. Matthew 26:27-28). This thanksgiving is at the heart of our faith and life! May the Holy Spirit make us do a 'Eucharistia' to God, and as a gift of love to others!"

May I the author of this letter add St. Paul's exhortation: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father" (Colossians 3:17).

—Dr. Hazel Colaso,
Bandra (West), Mumbai.

The Creature And The Christmas Tree

A Fairy Tale for Children

Once upon a time in a far-away land, a simple shepherd was taking home a long branch from a pine tree for his small family. It would serve the purpose of a Christmas Tree, he thought.

Suddenly, from out of thin air a great green billow of smoke rose in front of the shepherd. He was very afraid. He wanted to run. He wanted to shout for help. A rumbling noise around him made the man shake in fear.

Then, he heard the booming voice:

“Why did you cut my arm?”

The shepherd was speechless. After a long moment he gathered his courage and asked, “What are you talking about? I did not cut off anyone’s arm.”

“The branch of the pine tree is my arm!” the voice exploded in thunder, adding, “You must be punished or killed.”

“please, Sir,” the shepherd cried out to the invisible one he could not see. “I was taking this branch home for my family to decorate the house for the festival of Christmas.”

“No excuses, man. I think death is in order!”

“Spare my life, Sir, and I will obey your wish.”

All at once, the rumbling sound around him was muffled, as if the voice needed to think. The green smoke grew darker and thicker, when, in a startling rush of bitter-cold air the smoke parted and the sigh of a most horrible creature took form and stood before the shep-

herd. The creature looked like a man with the face of a wild beast, and with hands that were really tiger’s paws.

“If you must live bring me your first-born child to this spot where you stand, and on the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve. I will return the child to you, on condition that you will return my pine tree arm. If you should fail to return I will destroy your first-born. The ugly creature screamed, saying : “Go now, and return within the hour.”

“Take your arm now, Sir, and be done with it.”

“No. You must do as I said, at the stroke of twelve on Christmas Eve.” Snarled the beast.

Trembling in fear and with beads of cold perspiration on his face the man tried explaining to the man-creature that his eldest child was a girl badly deformed and mute in speech. The creature growled in anger and his voice echoed across the deep, dark forest.

“Bring the child!” The creature howled, adding, “the child will stay one week in my forest home.”

The shepherd fled as fast as he could, clinging on to the branch of the pine tree.

Breathless and tired the weary shepherd reached home within fifteen minutes, panting and out-of-breath. His wife and twin sons were the first to meet him. His daughter, physically misshapen, and dumb, with only a beautiful and happy smile on her face, greeted her father as he entered the



room.

The shepherd’s twin sons said: “Father, why do you look so sad?”

“What is wrong husband?” asked his wife.

The shepherd told his family the sad encounter he had with the terrible creature. They were all shocked to learn about the terrible creature, and that their daughter should be for one whole week with the beast.

The girl did not feel afraid that the creature wanted her to stay with him for one week. She smiled, and with a nod of her head assured her parents and brothers not to worry. She embraced them with a comforting smile on her face.

Before the hour was over, the simple shepherd, with tears flowing down his face took his daughter to the creature; and returned home with a heavy heart.

The branch of the pine tree made a wonderful Christmas tree in a corner of the room. It was gaily decorated with cotton-wool sprays and silver, silver thread, little glass globes and colorful candles. The gloom in the cottage hung heavy in the air and sorrow walked the



BY MELVYN BROWN

wooden floors day after day.

CHRISTMAS EVE had arrived. The long week was over. The day of the 24th December went by and it would soon be the hour of midnight. The Creature appeared, alone.

"Where is our daughter?" cried out the shepherd and his wife.

"First," boomed the beast, "Return my arm!"

The twin brothers stood at the spot where they were told to wait with the arm of the pine tree. The shepherd handed over the pine branch to the beast, as the village bell began to ring the midnight hour in the distance.

"Mother. Father. Brothers!" It was the voice of their daughter. The voice of their sister.

The family turned around and were amazed to see their child, their daughter, no more bent and misshapen, no longer mute – but beautiful, tall, with long raven black hair and an angelic voice.

"Look, Mother, look!" she pointed in the direction of the Creature. A handsome prince stood before them, no more the ugly Creature.

"His Spell has been broken," explained the girl, further stating, "that a wicked witch had cast a spell upon the prince because he refused to love her. The spell has been broken only because I was prepared to stay with the Creature for a whole week, not being afraid of his ugly beastly look. In return the witch had told him, if any girl breaks the spell, he can make a single wish in return as a reward. And the prince wished that I would be beautiful and a princess. "

The prince married the shepherd's daughter on Christmas Day, who had become a princess, and they all lived happily ever after.

Carry On And Create A Crib During Corona Time



Christmas celebrations are never complete without a Christmas crib and a beautifully decorated Christmas tree. Also referred to as Nativity Scene or Manger Scene, Christmas crib represents how Jesus was born. The Christmas crib exhibits figures that represent infant Jesus, his mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph. There are various other characters that are part of the Christmas crib. These characters include shepherds, sheep and angels. As described in the 'Gospel of Luke', all these characters are displayed near the manger in a barn (or cave) which is projected to accommodate farm animals. A donkey and an ox are also a part of this scene and Magi and their camels are also included. These characters are described in the 'Gospel of Matthew'. However, there are various cultures which add characters that may or may not be Biblical.

The celebration for Christmas is on and as a Mumbaikar enjoy the cosmopolitan atmosphere here. In the past, I was able to make my presence felt on the eve of Christmas by making an extensive coverage of the events before and after the festival. I was very much impressed by the crib set up in Sanpada Jubilee Church here and I was able to get a close look and take a snap for posting in FB and for sending it to some news dailies across the country. Once a newspaper in Pune selected my photo of the crib as one of the best and I feel proud to be an Indian. I always believe and work for unity in the diversity of the country

and make good use of the memorable events of last year's Christmas and working for doing exclusive coverage this year also in a big way.

Putting up the crib is the most exciting aspect of Christmas. As children we would use all our creativity and imagination to depict Christ's birth. Even today 12 days before the festival we sow grains like ragi and wheat which would grow into tiny crops that are then used to decorate the crib. To make mountains we would like to use brown paper and dry hay to make the set look like a stable. Once the crib is set we light 'kuthu vilakku' instead of candles on Christmas Day. Our parents always made sure that we used less paper to decorate the crib and encouraged us to use fresh flowers instead.



C.K. Subramaniam

It's a family tradition to put up the crib together. Each year I used to bring down the box that has all the decorations and my grandson takes keen interest to decorate and bring out the best in the Christmas tree and this year he plans to make a crib. The tree is where we try to experiment more and use newer ornaments and serial light and complete with most attractive decorations collected and purchased for the very purpose. The crib building is a creativity and you can keep in mind the history and bring out the best with your imagination. It is time to make a crib during corona time using all your imagination and expertise.



New Year Gift

Short Story

By Melvyn Brown

Around this time last New Year Eve, Rachel had sold the old rocking-chair and decided to buy a new one the following year. She was a young blond, tall, strong, with a beautiful face, sparkling walnut eyes and perfectly shaped lips.

From a distance, Roger had watched her and followed her in his ambassador wherever she went. All this was possible because he was a freelance journalist and a well-established author. He had all the free time to be with her without her knowledge, after all, Roger was not only an admirer, he was in love with her.

When a man loves a woman the way he did, certain rules had to be discreetly handled. From the first moment he had seen her – there was no looking back. The only problem being it was one-sided. Rachel didn't seem to know he existed. She had never once cast a glance his way. Her world was a different one from his. Roger was now determined to change it all.

Last year, a week before New Year, Rachel had fallen ill. Nothing serious. But it was enough to keep her in bed. Unknown to her, he had done a lot

One morning, from out of nowhere

Rachel had found her breakfast on a tray with a warm mug of hot tea, toasts, butter and jam, hard-boiled eggs, and a small note, 'Get well. Someone cares.' Lunch and dinner were served in a similar manner.

She was panic-stricken. The next day Roger remembered, she had changed the locks. But he knew how to get in and not be noticed. The thought of someone in the house where she lived alone frightened Rachel. She called the local police. That was when he stopped attempting to do anything.

Roger had always marveled at the way she walked, or stood at the bus stop. There were times when he had stood nearby to hear her speak to the shopkeepers, and the tone of her voice haunted him for hours on end. Her husky voice, the soft mellow laugh left him thrilled, yet, he was invisible to her senses. He could have reached out and touched her. She would not have known.

Back to the present. This evening he would speak to her. He braced himself for the moment. She had to know, he mused. Whatever the consequences, she had to be made aware of his fondness for her. It was not wrong, he consoled himself, to declare his feelings.

The thought of how she might react did not upset him. He had to be brave. Never venture never win. Roger re-

called the famous lines his mother used: Faint heart never won fair lady. It was, after all, a year since he had known her.

Rachel had no one. No relatives. No friends. No one to turn to for help or advice; not that he knew of. Like himself, she had no obligations and no attachments. Roger was the typical picture of an Anglo-Indian male. He had rugged features, a clean shaven face, well-groomed appearance with a proper disposition.

The cold blast of winter air brushed his cheeks, and a shudder ran down his spine. He stood outside the shop where Rachel worked as a supervisor. He looked at his wrist-watch and waited patiently for her to leave, counting the minutes and the seconds. The sharp winds didn't matter.

New Year shoppers raced up and down the road. It was 9 pm. In the pocket of his thick overcoat he felt the weight of the gold bangle.

At precisely 9., the shutters of the shop rolled down. Rachel had decided to walk out of the side entrance. Robert rubbed his hands and blew his hot breath into them.

She stepped out and moved across the deserted street at a brisk walk, only an hour back the same street was packed with people doing their last minute shopping. Robert walked behind her... Suddenly, he started to worry again. What if...No, he must not imagine the worst he kept telling himself.

The swish of her cotton dress against the long coat she wore made Rachel seem like a woman out of a Victorian novel. Her blond hair cascaded down her slender shoulders like a glistening stream. The loud click of her stilettos on the pavement made music of their own.

From the top floor window of an apartment, music flowed down to the street. What was Roger to do? The year had

passed by so soon, thought Roger. Rachel had not said a word to him in all this time. Would the spirit of the New Year help him to win her trust, and love?

The small gift in his coat pocket seemed to nudge him on. It had been his mother's gold bangle given to him before she passed away. "Give it to the woman you love", his mother had said, pressing the gold bangle in his hand.

The bus stop was empty. There were no cabs around – and Roger had also left his car behind this evening. Suddenly, the B23 bus came along, and it was empty. Was this to be a good omen? Was this providence?

Calcutta was never known to have an empty bus on any route. What he didn't know was that the bus in particular had been released by the police after being impounded.

He took the seat behind Rachel. She suddenly turned. He caught the flash of a hidden smile. Was his mind playing tricks on him? His heart raced heavily. She had noticed him, he gasped inwardly. "What now?"

"Miss..er.."

She stopped him with her raised hand and said:

"You have done so much for me this past one year. You have been so protective of me. I have noticed all your kind gestures: life is a glass you look through from both sides, if you want to. I would like to be your friend Roger. My name is Rachel. Don't ask me how I know your name," she smiled and went on, "I have a small New Year gift for you." She rummaged through her handbag and took out a gold wrist-watch. "It belonged to my father. Before he died, he told me to give it to the man who respected and cherished me. I think you truly deserve it."

As Roger reached out to accept it, his mother's gold bangle pinched him. He smiled- it was as if the spirit of his mother approved – and gently he reached into his coat pocket.

Christmas Spirit This Year

Santa Set The Scene

The Christmas preparations are on to make it a grand one this year. The festival of Christmas or the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ is celebrated with great cheer and enthusiasm all over India by the Christians. Christmas is also an occasion of family reunion. The members of the family living and working at a distance and different places join together in merry-making at one place and enjoy themselves. The man behind the story of Christmas and Santa Claus assumed much importance. St. Nicholas was a Bishop who lived in the fourth century in a place called Myra gave a shot to celebrate the festival with much fanfare. He was a very rich man because his parents died when he was young and left him a lot of money. He was willing to part gift and that became a practice. In this year's demonetization may not lose the spirit of Santa Claus handing over gifts to children

As Christmas is coming on the eve of New Year the celebrations assume greater importance with special prayers for Jesus. Mid-night prayers take place on the eve of Christmas and culminate with people of all ages participate in mass prayers. As a senior citizen of the country, I feel that India is my country and all the Indians are my brothers and sisters. There is no caste, creed or religion in this country. As such we have freedom to have our own right to join hands with our friends in celebrating 25th December with much ado and happiness. The celebration for Christmas is on and as a Mumbaikar enjoy the cosmopolitan atmosphere here. In the past, On the eve Christmas crib making attracted very much and regularly take a snap for posterity. I always believe and work for unity in diversity of the country and made good about the memorable events of last year's Christmas



and look for joyous festivity this year. Schools celebrate Christmas party to enhance their spirits and extend their love and affection during the participation of events. Even ladies having kitty party and office parties can have a get together followed by exchanging gifts after a fun game.

I like the Christmas right left game. Of course, all the gifts would need to be suitable for all those attending. If there are kids and adults, I would make two separate circles for playing the game. The right left game involves reading a story that has several rights and lefts in it. Each time the word left is heard, gifts are passed to the left. Each time the word right is heard, gifts are passed to the right. Have your guests sit in a circle, each with a gift in their lap. Have someone read the story live or tape it beforehand if you want absolutely everyone to participate in passing the gifts. When the story is over each person gets to keep the gift they have at that time. It is a matter of great fun and frolic for whole country to join the celebrations in a big way.



Jayanthi Subramaniam

Simple joys of life

by *Roshni Kalappura, Bangaluru*

What is life? What is the purpose of life?, What is happiness? Why there are sufferings? These are all questions everybody asks at times. Many answers are provided. While it is a matter of individual's perception and experience, let us now think of human satisfaction, which we normally term as happiness.

Happiness is one of the many emotions humans experience. Pleasurable satisfaction, a state of well-being and contentment are important elements of happiness. A simple joy such as when your dog greeting you on your return home in the evening, the arrival of your daughter from foreign country on leave, your little son's announcement about blooming of new roses in your garden are taken for granted and go unfelt. Happiness comes through good fortune and through loving and being loved. Even eating a good meal, being in good health and enjoying the comforts of life can also achieve it. The simple pleasures of life bring happiness whether it be enjoying your favorable dessert or a beautiful smelling rose or the sight of fruits hanging from your mango tree. Pearl S Buck an author wrote "Many people lose the little joys in the hope for the big happiness". Apart from successes, good health and longevity are associated with happiness. Psychologists say that lightheartedness that accompanies happiness helps lower the chances of strokes or depression.

Alexander the Great Macedonian conqueror found happiness in the best of food, clothing, wealth and ever increasing power. His contemporary the Greek Philosopher on the other hand believed that happiness is attained by leading life of simplicity free from struggles for wealth and power. When Alexander went to meet Diogenes to

offer him good food, wealth and accommodation, the wise man told him to everyone's astonishment, "Move over, I am enjoying the sunshine Don't block it with your shadow." Alexander was later heard saying "If I were not Alexander, I would be happy to be Diogenes" Later at the age of 32 on his deathbed Alexander made a dying wish "When my coffin is being carried to the grave, let the entire path leading to the graveyard be strewn with all the wealth of gems and precious stones that I have conquered. Let the world know that I cannot take even a farthing with me. Ultimately all these precious stones will turn to dust just like my body"

Little joys should be celebrated as the life is a series of happy moments. It is not something which can be postponed for enjoyment at a later date. A poet once wrote "What is this life, if full of care we have no time to stand and stare?". This means we run fast to get more of everything- higher salaries, bigger houses, better cars, a very secure future- without stopping to enjoy the beauty and smell of the red roses in the garden, without knowing about children's study and their examination.

The awareness of the present moment is very important to find joy in the present. To find joy in the smallest of things, it is necessary to decide what is important to us. It could be the company of loved ones, it could be a hobby, it could be a vocation. Once it is clear as to what is important to us we can simply de-clutter our life of what is not important. It is simple like clearing the house of clutter. Once we simplify our life, we make room for more joy in our life. We should therefore resolve to be happy and find joy in the smallest of things in life. Most of us live ordinary lives, doing ordinary things. Not all of us are destined for great things. So it is upto us to make this life count. We



can say that making happiness is individual.

Our mind should be able to look forward optimistically to welcome and celebrate the smallest of wonders like the smile of a baby, the sight of a kitten gambolling after a piece of string, a smell of a sweet dish on the stove, the sound of the chirping birds in the early morning, the smell of paper in new book, the abandon with which children greet the end of the school term to enter into the long holiday - all these are every day things that bring us joy.

Sometimes, hoping for things that you think about, you might make yourself happy. — a new dress, a new house, a new job etc. If they do not materialise, actual happiness will not happen. So if we are searching for pleasure, we are better off focusing on the simple joys. Joy sits within you and affects how you perceive, interpret and experience

Family creates a strong foundation for the emotional as well as physical well being. Each member is unique and so are their needs. But the common practices help generally build a strong happy and healthy family. Family plays a crucial role in both, helping you get over addictions as well as developing healthy habits. They cheer you and also are the first to point out to you when you falter. Thus individuals with positive and supportive people around have good mental health. Family can help you deal with stress by encouraging you to relax your mind. Communication between members will go a long way to reduce problems and to increase understanding and happiness. The family's share in the generation of happiness to individuals cannot be ignored.

Modern Saints

Feastday: Dec 20

The Worker Priest

(St Vincent Dominic Romano)

By Fr F. M. Britto

Along with the renowned Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Oscar Romero, Pope Francis canonized a son of a poor, rural man at St Peter's Square recently. That unassuming parish priest has left behind him a legacy of committed fraternal charity and care, besides personal simplicity of life.

Vincent Dominic Romano was born in Via Piscopia, in Torre del Greco city of Naples, Italy, on June 3, 1751. He was the third son of poor but pious parents Nicola Luca and Maria Grazia Romano. They named him after their favourite miracle-working Dominican Saint Vincent Ferrer. Among his two elder brothers, Pietro and Giuseppe, the eldest one became a priest.

Reading the books of St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, the boy Romano developed a strong devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. Due to the influence of Father Agostino Scognamiglio, Romano wanted to become a priest. His father had desired him to become a goldsmith. It became harder for him to enter into priesthood because Cardinal Antonino Sersale imposed new admission rules, due to his high number of seminarians and the local clergy.

Due to the financial aid of a patron, the 14 years old Romano could get admitted in the diocesan seminary of Naples. His priest brother Pietro also supported him. The 24 years old Romano was ordained a priest on June 10, 1775 for Naples archdiocese. He was then assigned as an assistant parish priest to Santa Croce parish, which included the entire city of Torre del Greco, the most populated city in the territory of Naples.

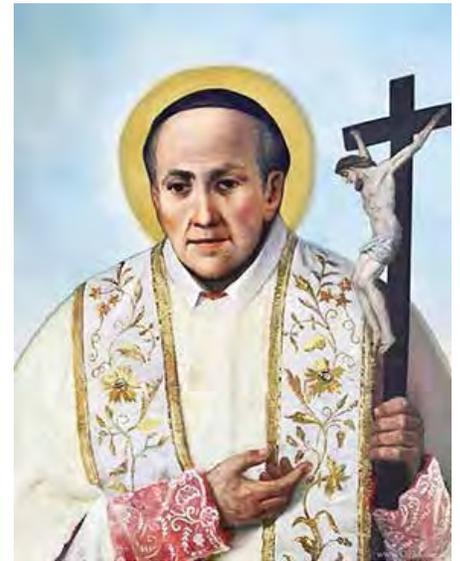
On June 15, 1794 the nearby Mount Vesuvius erupted, almost completely

destroying the city and the parish church. Father Romano immediately dedicated himself to the difficult task of organizing the material and spiritual reconstruction of the city and the parish. He even cleared a great deal of rubble with his own hands. That earned him the nick name from the people of Torre del Greco 'The Worker Priest'. As the parish priest, Father Romano rebuilt the damaged Santa Croce Church in 1827, making it very beautiful.

Along with the reconstruction of the church, Romano also took an active interest in the social reality of his time. As a priest dedicated to the people, he cared his flock faithfully at this time of natural disaster. He took keen interest in bringing up the orphaned children and the education of the poor. Besides looking after the sick, as a good pastor, he cared the poor, especially the coral fishermen and their families, who drew their livelihood from the seas.

Along with the material care, Romano paid special attention to the Christian formation of the children. Aiming proper Christian upbringing of his parishioners, he preached catechetical homilies. He was also a zealous minister of liturgical worship and of the celebration of the sacraments and evangelized people. He was also noted for his simple and austere life. But some French invaders and some Italian political groups of his area opposed him.

Accidentally the 74 years old priest fell down on January 1, 1825 and fractured his left thighbone, causing his slow decline. Surrendering himself to the wounded Christ, patiently he endured in prayer the long and painful confinement to bed. Finally, the 80 years old Romano died of pneumonia on Dec 20, 1831. He was buried in his beloved Santa Croce Church. He had spent his entire priestly life, 56 long years, in that



parish.

Within 12 years of his death, his beatification process started on Sept 22, 1843, under Pope Gregory XVI. Pope Leo XIII proclaimed him a Venerable on March 25, 1895. Pope Paul VI presided over his beatification ceremony on Nov 17, 1963. During his pastoral visit to Naples, Pope John Paul II paid homage at his tomb on Nov 11, 1990. And Pope Francis canonized him on Oct 14, 2018 at St Peter's Square, along with Pope Paul VI, Oscar Romero and four others. He was canonized along with the one who beatified him, i.e., Pope Paul VI. He has become one of the newest canonized saints of the Catholic Church.

Known as the Worker Priest, Romano serves as a model for pastors everywhere of simple, self-giving holiness. He didn't write any acclaimed theological treatises or travel very far from his home town. But he is a universal witness to holiness. He became a tireless shepherd for the people of God. Romano became the very heart and soul of the material and spiritual rebirth of Torre del Greco. He is remarked to be an Apostle of charity, care of orphans, Eucharistic Adorer, Evangelist, Catechist, a lover of his flock and cared the seminarians.

Romano was also proclaimed the patron of orphans and throat tumors.



"If you're always grateful for the little things, it's hard to avoid momentary happiness. It's a lack of gratitude that often keeps us feeling down."

- Marc & Angel Chernoff

The first family gathering of a neighbourhood after the COVID-19 related lockdown was lifted in toto had an astonishingly encouraging attendance of parents, children, youth and the aged. Needless to say, it indicated a deep desire on the part of many to see and meet each other, exchange news both pleasant and not so pleasant, share both tears related to the havoc the pandemic had caused as well as the joys of simply being alive and able to meet up!

Amazingly, the gathering, as if guided by some invisible force, slowly but steadily fell into groups of commonality. The children were the first to connect with each other pretty well and were the first to plonk on the floor in one corner of the hall and start exchanging notes. The youth seemed to prefer just standing in another corner, their arms on each other's shoulders even as they animatedly discussed the pandemic and the after-effects of the forced lockdown. It was touching to see some of them consoling one another even as the parents spontaneously drew up chairs in an impromptu circle and unabashedly wept as they shared their perspectives. As for the aged, they too got into a discussion of their own in a smaller group.

Against the backdrop of the second consecutive COVID-19 year fast pass-

ing into eternity, in each of the four groups there were real-life stories being told, sentiments and challenges highlighting the need to look at things in a different light being shared. From the wonder of the all-pervasive attitude of gratitude prevailing emerged the following:

- It's good to be alive!
- Health is wealth.
- Thank God, I have a roof over my head.
- Lucky am I to have delicious home-cooked food on my plate.
- What would I ever do but for the loving parents I have and the other members of my extended family who love me and whom I love?
- God could not be everywhere, so He made friends.
- Having the ability to learn new things, with each new day I keep getting better and wiser.
 - Thank God for literacy!
 - Music makes the world go round. I make music—so I make the world go round!
 - From the rising of the Sun unto its setting, may the name of God be praised!
 - I can run at the beach which is walking distance from home.

- The hard times I was struggling to cope with didn't suddenly vanish but began to appear in a better perspective.
- I learnt from life's pains, to understand the pains of others.
- Life would be impossible without challenges.
- There is no happiness without some sadness—each requires the other.

The above statements recorded on mobiles couldn't help but make a world of difference to all present, offering as they did due inspiration as follows:

- Refrain from taking people and things for granted.
- When someone upsets you, try to find one thing about them that you

are grateful for.

- When procrastinating on a task, be thankful for the opportunity to complete it.
- When ill or injured, focus on what makes you grateful.
- When you lose a loved one, let your grief give way to gratitude for the time and experiences shared.
- When facing something negative, remember your ability to be positive and grow wiser.
- When someone doesn't like you, or judges you unfairly, do your best to be grateful that they cared enough to even pay you some attention. Remember: Attention is time, and time is a gift!

The bottom line is that the possibility of the kind of year we give ourselves lies with each of us. Thus, as the receding year 2021 makes way for the New Year 2022, what lesson do we pick out from the cinders of the dreadful year that has been? If the chief lesson learnt is 'gratitude', it won't be difficult for us to realize that the secret to being grateful is no secret – we simply choose to be grateful. And we do it again and again...., conscious that every day is a new beginning in itself.

Essentially, if you believe that spending a few minutes each day journaling a gratitude list, or just reflecting on what you're grateful for at the moment, you can change your life by beginning to compile that list not in the coming New Year but during the last few days of the passing year itself! Doing so without rushing through would make you feel a genuine sense of gratitude in your heart for the good that you carry over from the old year into the new. Focusing on the little miracles in your life and appreciating all the progress you've made, too, will enable you to see how you've grown through the ups and downs you've experienced. The credit you give yourself for your resilience will certainly see you through anything in the New Year!



by Ladislaus
Louis D'Souza

What's the best thing to give your parents for Christmas?

A list of everything you want!

Funny Christmas Jokes:

Q: What do you call an elf who sings?

A: a wrapper!

Q: Why is Christmas just like your job?

A: You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit.

Q: Why is Santa so jolly?

A: Because he knows where all the naughty girls live.

Q: Why doesn't Santa have any kids?

A: He only comes once a year.

Q: What's the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the ordinary alphabet?

A: The Christmas alphabet has Noel.

Q: What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?

A: Claustrophobic.

Q: Why the Christmas tree can't stand up?

A: It doesn't have legs. What do you call an obnoxious reindeer? RUDEolph.

Q: Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A: Because he had low elf esteem.

On the first day of school, the teacher asked a student, "What are your parents' names?" The student replied, "My father's name is Laughing and my mother's name is Smiling."

The teacher said, "Are you kidding?" The student said, "No, Kidding is my brother. I am Joking."

A man was driving and saw a truck stalled on the side of the highway that had ten penguins standing next to it. The man pulled over and asked the truck driver if he needed any help. The truck driver replied, "If you can take these penguins to the zoo while I wait for AAA that will be great!" The man agreed and the penguins hopped into the back of his car. Two hours later, the trucker was back on the road again and decided to check on the



penguins. He showed up at the zoo and they weren't there! He headed back into his truck and started driving around the town, looking for any sign of the penguins, the man, or his car. While driving past a movie theater, the truck driver spotted the guy walking out with the ten penguins. The truck driver yelled, "What are you doing? You were supposed to take them to the zoo!" The man replied, "I did and then I had some extra money so I took them to go see a movie."

One night a lady came home from her weekly prayer meeting, found she was being robbed, and she shouted out, "Acts 2:38: 'Repent & be baptized & your sins will be forgiven.'" The robber quickly gave up & the lady rang the police. While handcuffing the criminal, a policeman said, "Gee mate, you gave up pretty easily. How come you gave up so quickly?" The robber said, "She said she had an axe and two 38's!"

How is Christmas like your job? You do all the work and the fat guy in the suit gets all the credit.

Mother: "Sweetie, make a Christmas wish."

Girl: "I wish that Santa will send some clothes to those naked girls in papa's computer."

Yo momma is so stupid when I told her Christmas is right around the corner she went looking for it.

A little kids sends a letter to Santa that says: "Dear Santa I want a brother for Christmas."

Santa writes back, "Dear Timmy send me your mommy."

Q: What do elves learn in school?

A: The Elfabet.

Why is Santa Claus so jolly?

Because he knows where all the naughty girls live.

What do the female reindeer do when Santa takes the male reindeer out on Christmas Eve?

They go into town and blow a few bucks.

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?

Claustrophobic.

Three men all die on Christmas Day and arrive at the pearly gates. Peter greets them and tells them that they are all evil men who should go to hell, but because it's Christmas, he'll let them into heaven if they have something representing the holiday with them. One of the guys has a Christmas ornament, and gets let in. Another guy has pine needles on his shirt, and gets let in. The third guy pulls out a pair of panties. "How do those represent Christmas?" asks Peter. "These are Carol's."

How does Santa count his girl elves?

HO HO HO

Why can't Boris Johnson make his Christmas cake until the last minute? He doesn't know how many tiers it should have.

How is the pandemic like my stomach after Christmas?

It'll take ages to flatten the curve.

Moe: What are you going to give your younger brother for Christmas this year?

Joe: I haven't decided yet.

Moe: What did you give him last year?

Joe: The measles.



The Magi

By Peter Castellino

Hidrotos says that the Magi were an ancient Persian caste or tribe of Median origin and not a priestly family and Zoroaster was a Magus and they headed Zoroastrianism based on their original religion and molded a pre-Zoroastrian religion of which nothing is known except for inferences and after Zoroaster Magion priests headed Zoroastrianism of whom the greatest was Saina.

The Magi were revered as wise men and their power over demons gave rise to the word magic and had a reputation for magic and supernatural powers ie magic .

The Wise Men of the East / Magi or Three Kings came from the East were according to English Bible translations were men who studied the stars and astrologers who could foresee the birth of a Messiah from the study of the stars and came to adore the newborn Jesus according to Matthew 2 and were the first to tell Herod about the birth and the star of Bethlehem was a sign for them and they returned to their country which they were told to return to by a different route in a dream so they went from Jordan to avoid Jerusalem and Jericho or a roundabout way south through Beershiba then east

to the great highway now the Mecca route in the land of Maob and beyond the Dead Sea after which St Thomas baptized them and they spread the faith of Christianity and Christian tradition has put their numbers as three from their gifts of gold , frankincense and myrrh and has called them kings from Ps72.10.11 and Isa 49.7.23 considered as prophecies and given them the names Casper or Gasper as an Indian king, Melchoir as a Persian king and Balthazar / Balthasar as an Arabian king but in Armenia they are called Kaspar , Melkon and Baghdasar and they are also called the Three Kings of Cologne because of the shrine to them in the cathedral of Cologne, Germany by Fredrick Barbarossa where the relics are kept but before this St Helena found the Magi's relics in Persia and then they were taken to Constantinople and then to Milan , Italy

Casper from Gasper from the Chaldean word Gizbar according to Strong's Concordance means treasurer and has the same meaning in Hebrew and Gizbar is in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament's Book of Ezra and in the 1st century BC the Septuagint his Greek translation in Ezra 1:8 was Gasbarinou ie son of Gaspar and the translation of Gizbar to Cesspar and Kaspar is summarized as Gizbur , Gasper , Caspar and Kasper with C being a misreading of the manuscript G and

K having the same phonetic value as C and Gutschonid 1864 says another derivation is the corruption of the Indo-Iranian name Gondhophores and he was King Gondspheres AD 21- c AD 47 mentioned in the Acts of Thomas or from Southern India which Thomas the Apostle visited later and Piravom town in Kerala meaning birth refers to the Nativity of Jesus where 3 churches are named after the magi whilst Casper's kingdom was in the region of Egrisilla in India Superior which forms the eastern side of Sinus Magnus in the gulf of Thailand according to Johannes.

Schoner according to his globe in 1515 saw on it Egrisilla Bragmami / Ergisilla of the Brahmins and in the explanatory treatise noted that in the Egrisilla region there are Brahmins ie Indian Christians Gasper the Magus held dominion and the phrase hic rex caspar habitavit ie here lived King Caspar is inscribed over the Golden Chersonese Malay Peninsula on the mappemonde of Andrias Walsperger made in Constance around 1448 but it is not known whether a latter day king took the name Caspar.

Late medieval depiction of Caspar as an African king are due to the accounts of the hajj pilgrimage of Ghanaian ruler Mornsa Missa and he has a reddish beard and in the middle of the 3 kings and is younger than Melchoir and older than Balthasir and waits behind Melchoir to give his frankincense gift to the child Jesus and is shown accepting his gift from his assistant or removing his crown to be at Jesus' feet and after returning to his country and avoiding King Herod he celebrated Christmas with the other Magi in Armenia in 54 AD and died aged 109 so January 11 is his feast day because of his death and the Gentag an official encyclical from functionary from the Greek word Kantakean says that the Magi went northwards from Bethlehem arriving on a plain outside Moush an ancient city and Gasper the oldest Magi passed away in the middle of

the night and the other 2 mag before returning home grieved and arranged for his burial with the help of the local people at the base of the hill with a sepulcher overlooking their camping site which they maintained for 300 years and the oral tradition about the magi visiting Jesus in Bethlehem and the passing away of Gaspar on his return journey and St Gregory the Illuminator when staying temporarily was told about the magi's burial place by local people some of whom were pagans and recognizing its importance had a monastery called Svrp Kashpavi Vani or Kasparavank built around the place and on Theophany when the Christmas Star appeared in the night the monks priests and pilgrims would offer the first Holy Eucharist on the first day on the altar table.

King Abgar / Apkar of Edessa knew about the Magi's tradition and wanted according to church history to know more about church history and wrote a letter to Jesus Christ to heal him in the city and after the Resurrection the Apostle Thaddeus journeyed to Edessa preached about Christianity healed the king and baptized him making him the first Christian king of Armenia.

St Melchoir / Meichoair the oldest magi was king of Persia along with Casper and Balthazar visited Jesus after he was born and gave the gift of gold to him and is a saint in the Western Church together with the other 2 magi St Bede describes him as an old man

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Let's put Christ back into Christmas

*Can someone bring back the Christmas of old,
When mum made sweets and her pork curry was gold,
When the stars and cribs were made from paper and hay,
When days became nights and nights became day,
When we practiced the hymns till our throats got sore,
When our only new clothes, with pride we wore,
When we decorated the house with the same old lights,
Except that they shone brighter during those nights,
When we went for Mass every Christmas night,
And made sure our childhood crush was within our sight,
When we wished everyone with a hug and kiss,
Can someone bring back those days, Oh how I wish.
I asked the Lord, "How can I do that?"
How can I have the same feeling, I once had.
He said, "My son, back then, I was the centre of it all.
Try doing the same and Christmas might just be the same after all!"*

— Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai



with white hair and a long beard and on the return journey to Persia met up with the other magi in 54 AD in the kingdom of Armenia to celebrate Christmas before dying at the age of 116 on 1 , January , 55 AD.

St Balthazar / Balthaser / Balthassar / Bethesana along with the other 2 Magi visited the infant Jesus and is traditionally called King of Macedonia and gave him the gift of myrrh and in the original manuscript is called Bithisana and later in Western Christianity is called Balthazar and St Bede in the 8th century says he had a black complexion with a heavy beard and the myrrh in his hand an expensive item at that time prefigured the death of the Son of Man and together with the Magi followed the Star of Bethlehem to Herod's palace and Herod told the Magi to inform him when they found Jesus and on returning to his country and avoiding Herod and celebrating Christmas with

the other Magi in Armenia in 54 AD he died on 55 AD which is feast day.

Balthazar and Gaspar are the characters in the 1870 novel Ben-Hur : A Tale of the Christ and the various film adoptions of the novel which chronicles his later years and his feast day is January 6.

In the 21st century a campaign was started to let a black man play Balthazar in plays rather than a blackface and until recently smaller Spanish towns had no sub-Sharan African people to play the part of Balthazar so the black face tradition continues but an African descent person is used to play the role in the cavaleades ie a formal procession of people walking on horseback or riding in vehicles.

Thus we see the importance of the Magi.

Scientific death of Jesus

At the age of 33, Jesus was condemned to death. At that time, crucifixion was the worst death. Only the worst criminals were condemned to be crucified. Yet, it was even more dreadful for Jesus (unlike other criminals) to be nailed to the cross by His hands and feet.

Each nail was 6 to 8 inches long. The nails were driven into His wrist and not into His palms as is commonly portrayed. There's a tendon in the wrist that extends to the shoulder. The Roman guards knew that when the nails were being hammered into the wrist the tendon would tear and break, forcing Jesus to use His back muscles to support Himself so that He could breathe.

Both of His feet were nailed together. Thus He was forced to support Himself on a single nail that impaled His feet to the cross.

Jesus could not support himself with

His legs because of the pain so He was forced to alternate between arching His back using his legs just to continue to breathe.

Imagine the struggle, the pain, the suffering and the courage Jesus endured for over three hours on the cross.

A few minutes before He breathed His last, Jesus stopped bleeding. He was simply pouring water from his wounds.

From common images we see wounds on His hands and feet and even the spear wound on His side. But do we realise that His wounds were actually made in His body?

A hammer driving large nails through the wrist. The feet overlapped and an even large nail hammered through the arches, then a Roman guard piercing His side with a spear. But before the nails and the spear, Jesus was whipped and beaten. The whipping was so severe that it tore the flesh from His body. The beating was so horrific that His face

was torn and his beard ripped from His face. The crown of thorns on His head was cut deeply into His scalp.

Most men would not have survived this torture. He had no more blood to bleed out, only water poured from His wounds.

The adult human body contains about 3.5 litres of blood. Jesus poured out all 3.5 litres of His blood. He had three nails hammered into His members. A crown of thorns on His head and beyond that, a Roman soldier who stabbed a spear into His chest. All these without mentioning the humiliation He suffered after carrying His own cross for almost 2 kilometres, while the crowd spat on His face and threw stones (the cross was almost 30 kg of weight) on Him.

Jesus had to endure this experience to open the gates of heaven so that you and I can have free access to God and that your sins could be "washed" away.

Yes, Jesus died for you and for me

— Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

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Christmas Spirit This Year

Carry On Christmas Celebrations With Santa Claus

It is during this time of the year when there is celebration around the world. Your travel overseas often proved doubly delightful when your overseas visits coincided with Christmas and New Year festivities. The myth of Santa Claus has enthralled children and even adults for a long time. The figure of Santa Claus has been the beacon of hope for crying children, was the reason used by parents to encourage their children to be good for the year and has become the universal symbol for laughter and joy. The "Real" Santa Claus blurs the boundary between reality and fiction.

Waiting for the Santa to visit home on a winter night with carol singers and receiving a surprise gift at a party from the white bearded man is something that everyone looks forward to during Christmas, especially children. The Santa Claus is the most sought after person. Donning the role of Santa Claus, depicted as a fat, jolly, white bearded man wearing a red coat with white collar and cuffs, red trousers, boots who goes around with a red bag slung behind, however, is no easy job. Greeting us with Finnish chocolates and the trademark, "Ho Ho Ho!", the "Real Santa Claus" sat with a buoyant smile, personifying the spirit of Christmas.

Nobody wants to volunteer for the role. Besides dressing up in advance and being a fun loving person, Santa needs to know how to manage a mob of children, and part with the gift on the Christmas eve. Many churches identify youth to play the part; they fit in the role with well tucked pillow bags acting as tummy and loads of energy

to keep them going for hours together. Finding a different person to dress up as Santa every year makes the choice tougher in many churches as the identity of the person inside the mask should not be guessed easily.

Santa is a much-loved part of both religious and secular celebrations of Christmas. Santa Claus is more than someone who just comes and gives you a present, it's this whole spirit of giving and magic that you get to be a part of and celebrate. Parents have been talking to kids about Santa since 1986. Jewish children say they believe in Santa even if he doesn't visit their house on Christmas Eve.

Many non-Christian parents embrace Santa because they see Christmas serving as a secular as well as religious holiday. Some experts say that another reason children believe in Santa is because they are imaginative and love to pretend. Experts have debated the Santa myth for years. Some argue that perpetuating it discourages healthy skepticism in children and requires adults to carry on an elaborate lie. Santa Claus entertain children on the eve of Christmas.

As a world- renowned figure, we uses the myth of Santa Claus to reach out to children and adults alike, to spread the message of kindness and serve as a diplomatic ambassador to spread the message of love among the children and Santa Claus play the mediator role in this act. MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL READERS.



C.K. Subramaniam

' Very interesting facts about St Joseph- the husband of Mary'

The year of St Joseph has just ended on 8-12-2021 and here are some very interesting facts about him.

St Matthew 1:16 says Jacob was his father and St Luke 3:23 says Heli was his father .

Rachel was Joseph and Benjamin's mother and his father' favorite wife and Leah her oldest sister was his first wife and the children were the progenitors of 2 of the 12 Israeli tribes

Joseph resided at Bethlehem but for few months before the Annunciation resided at Nazareth and his siblings were Clopas and Eugenio Refflo and at 40 he married Melcha / Escha / Salome for 49 years and had 6 children ie 2 daughters and 4 sons and James the Lesser was Jesus' youngest brother and 1 year after his wife's death and when was 90 years -old the priests announced that they wanted to find a respectable man to marry Mary who was 12 -years old and he is associated with the lily through an ancient legend that he was chosen from amongst the men suitors by the blossoming of his staff like a lily when the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and then wed Mary according to Jewish custom.

Joseph according to the venerable Bede was buried at Josaph at Mount Olives foot near Jerusalem or at Nazareth .

Joseph was a carpenter and built furniture and utensils needed for life at Nazareth and carpenters built or repaired ploughs or threshing sheds or cut a roofing or shaped a yoke for new oxen and built door frames storage chests or did other repairs and they used the hammer , saw , axe , planer and workbench and so besides the lily his other symbols were the carpenter's square for his trade and truth .

Breakfast was dried bread and the bread was kneaded by hand and freshly baked every day and used for lunch was oil with bread and herbs and herbs and oil in the evening and when Jesus was born the large day meal was wheat barley bread cheese vegetables , fruits , beans lentils and eggs and fish and chicken was the common meat and beef/ the fatted calf and lamb was only served on certain occasions and water was carried in wineskins.

The relics of St Joseph are the Santo Anello ie the sacred wedding ring given to Mary by St Joseph , the belt of St Joesph at Notre Dame de Jainville -sur -Marne , the staff of St Joseph at the Hermitage of Camaldoli , Italy near Arezzo and the cloak of St Joseph at Rome's Basilica of Sant Anatasia.

—Peter Castellino

What Christmas Means to Me



Despite all the fun and laughter, Christmas has a much deeper meaning for me. I have always felt that it is a good time for forgiveness because it is the birthday of Jesus Christ, who was born to forgive us and save us from all our sins. Jesus Christ came to the earth because He loves us. He came to the earth to forgive us and make us free from the burden of sins. Christians believe that we are all sinners and without the blood of Jesus, we are all doomed and Satan can dominate us. But God loves us so much that He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to the earth so that we can all have eternal life.

John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

God forgives us our sins every day, every hour, every minute and every second. God never sets a time or a period for forgiveness. He is always ready to forgive us if we pray and ask for His forgiveness. Just like we have been forgiven, we should also forgive

those who have hurt us. Jesus said that unless we forgive others, God wouldn't forgive us (Matthew 6:15).

As a human being and especially when we've been hurt badly, forgiving may not be that easy. But remembering the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all unrighteousness and sets us free from the power of sin and death, we should forgive others. Refusing to forgive will make our hearts a place for Satan's seed of bitterness. Forgiving will unlock the chains in our life for God to work in our hearts.

Living with an unforgiving nature can also be harmful for our health, because many diseases, including depression and arthritis, have been associated with bitterness and the tendency to not let go.

So, if there's anyone who you need to forgive --- be it friends, family members or enemies; this Christmas start with them and make peace with your past. Most importantly make peace with your own self. If there ever was a time to do so, then this is it!

— Jubel D'Cruz

New Year Gifting Tradition

The tradition of giving and receiving gifts is an integral part of every festival. And so it is with New Year's Day. New Year's Day is an occasion when we give gifts to our family members, friends and relatives and make their New Year begin on a sweet note.

But do you know how the tradition of gift-giving became associated with the New Year celebrations? The tradition has its roots from earlier times. Today, every country has adopted this tradition of gifting. The day when every gift shop dreams of making it big on the sales chart is the first of January. It is believed that this tradition is the best way to heal up our sour relationships with people and develop a feeling of togetherness and love for people whom we care. That is why we say it with flowers and presents. So, people across the world love to follow this tradition.

The Magi were wise men and their gifts were emblematic of tribute, worship and death -- of Christ considered as king, God and the sacrificial victim. The Magi were regarded as the pioneer in gift-giving tradition following the birth of Jesus. But in Europe it is sometimes said to have been prevalent even before Jesus was born. In France, Switzerland, Russia and Greece, bartering of presents was in vogue even before Jesus' birth. However, it can certainly be said that the tradition got a new significance and that too a religious one with the Magi who presented their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child at his stable in Bethlehem 2020 years ago.

— Jubel D'Cruz

Inviting Proposals for **USA** Settled Indian Christian Brides and Grooms

Grooms

MU291119 - Age 34, Edn. MBA., PG.
 MU111311 - Age 33, Edn. BE (IT)
 MU121586 - Age 50, Edn. M. Eng.
 MU311596 - Age 43, Edn. B.Sc.,
 MU221671 - Age 35, Edn. ME., M.Tech. MS
 MU231795 - Age 42, Edn. MBA, PG., MS
 MU111888 - Age 35, Edn. Masters)IT)
 MU412052 - Age 30, Edn. ME., M.Tech.
 MU222121 - Age 32, Edn. M.Phil., Neu.Sc.
 MU112144 - Age 34, Edn. BE., B.Tech.,
 MU212208 - Age 41, Edn. BE., B.Tech.,
 MU332212 - Age 31, Edn. BE., B.Tech., (IT)
 MU212277 - Age 30. Edn. M.Sc., Masters
 MU332283 - Age 33. Edn. BE., (IT)
 MU122288 - Age 32. Edn. Masters. BE.,
 MU142503 - Age 40 Edn. M.Sc.,
 MU122509 - Age 36. Edn. MD., MS., (IT)
 MU112929 - Age 35. Edn. M.Sc.,
 MU112936 - Age 30. Edn. ME., M.Tech., MS

Brides

FU322205 - Age 30, Edn. M.Pharma.Mastrs
 FU112233 - Age 29, Edn. ME., M.Tech.
 FU232338 - Age 28, Edn. B.Sc.,
 FU211009 - Age 32, Edn. BE., B.Tech. (IT)
 FU321130 - Age 36, Edn. MA., MBA.
 FU221208 - Age 32, Edn. M.Sc., Medical
 FU311427 - Age 35, Edn. MBA., PG., BE.
 FU221435 - Age 31, Edn. MD., MS.
 FU231576 - Age 29, Edn. Masters, MS.,
 FU132065 - Age 29, Edn. M.Sc.,
 FU332561 - Age 28, Edn. B.E., B.Tech.,
 FU112658 - Age 27, Edn. M.Phil / Ph.D.,
 FU122697 - Age 29, Edn. M.Sc., Computer
 FU142755 - Age 28, Edn. MD., MS.,
 FU122970 - Age 29, Edn. ME., M.Tech., MS
 FU333045 - Age 26, Edn. Degree in Medical

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can contact : **Royal Christian Family,**
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Grooms

MC310508 - Age 39, Edn. BE/B.Tech.
 MC350723 - Age 34, Edn. B.Sc., Chef
 MC021335 - Age 46, Edn. BE/B.Tech.
 MC401574 - Age 30, Edn. BHMS/BAMS
 MC491764 - Age 31, Edn. MBA PGDM
 MC052036 - Age 32, Edn. BE/B Tech. IT
 MC192449 - Age 48, Edn. CA, CPA, CGA
 MC182574 - Age 34, Edn. BHMS/BAMS
 MC282592 - Age 34, Edn. BE/B Tech. IT
 MC152634 - Age 35, Edn. B Com. Banker
 MC172944 - Age 33, Edn. MBA PGDM
 MC112951 - Age 30, Edn. M Sc., EM

Brides

FC222510 - Age 30, Edn. MBA PGDM
 FC341589 - Age 29, Edn. BE/B Tech.IT. MBA
 FC171624 - Age 29, Edn. BE/B Tech
 FC211590 - Age 30, Edn. MBA PGDM
 FC172191 - Age 28, Edn. B.A. B.ED
 FC112265 - Age 28, Edn. BA
 FC152266 - Age 28, Edn. MA., HR
 FC152344 - Age 27, Edn. B Com
 FC162750 - Age 26, Edn. MBA PGDM
 FC260690 - Age 32, Edn. M.Sc.,
 FC310734 - Age 47, Edn. MBA PGDM
 FC330899 - Age 32, Edn. M Sc
 FC321665 - Age 31, Edn. BCA/BCS
 FC192735 - Age 34, Edn. B Com
 FC162752 - Age 37, Edn. MA
 FC122963 - Age 35, Edn. BSc., Nursing

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in Canada.

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Christmas – Man's Search for Meaning

In the popular show, 'America's Got Talent', Golden Buzzer contestant, Jane Marcewski delivered an awesome performance. Going as 'Night Birdie', she delivered her own composition, 'It's OK!' She revealed that she was battling cancer which had attacked her spine and her lungs. 'You can't wait until Life isn't hard anymore to decide to be happy!'

Abraham Maslow, in his 'Hierarchy of Needs', said that once our basic needs are met, then the intangible needs of Meaning, Love and Self Actualization can be fulfilled.

Viktor Frankl was an Austrian psychiatrist, who lost everything in the Holocaust. He was imprisoned in concentration camps for three years. His wife, Tilley, had starved to death in a women's concentration camp. His brother had been killed in another camp. He formulated Logo Therapy in sharp contrast to Maslow. In his best seller, 'Man's Search for Meaning' he focused on the problems of Aggression, Addiction and Depression our Youth are facing, we have to search for and find a Meaning for Life. If there is a Meaning in Life at all, there must be a meaning in Suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of Life. 'Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstance, to choose one's own way.'

The Nativity celebrations remind us of the stark poverty and Rejection faced by our Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ. Had even one home welcomed Him, that home would have been a worldwide center of pilgrimage today. He Spent His First night on earth in a Bethlehem stable, and His Last Night in a cold prison cell, bleeding profusely from his wounds and pain.

His birth was heralded by angel choirs to shepherds who were grazing their flock of sheep, reportedly meant for the Temple sacrifice. Till the end, He Sought to elicit the goodness in every human being. This led St Dismas, the Good Thief on the Cross, to recognize the Power and Mercy of Jesus and claim Paradise promised by the dying Savior.

The meaning of Christmas is the message of hope and healing through the pain and darkness surrounding us in our journey through Life.

Wishing you A Joyful Christmas!

—*Denis Khan*



PINK IS BEAUTIFUL

In the Christian tradition, joy is the theme of the third week of Advent, the four-week series of spiritual preparation before Christmas. Christmas is a joyful celebration of the birth of the baby Jesus, God's entry into the world. Traditionally, the candle which is lit on the third Sunday of Advent is pink.

Pink has not always been considered a colour for girls. There was no sudden, unanimous cultural shift but both men and women wear pink attire and that suits them well. It is still seen as both men and boys wearing a feminine colour, not as just another colour. It gets noticed, no matter who wears it. The attraction of pink colour is just more than people wearing red colour. Pink colour is more English in nature and people love to have a good look with pink.

Pink is a pale red color that is named after a flower of the same name. It was first used as a color name in the late 17th century. According to surveys in Europe and the United States, pink is the color most often associated with charm, politeness, sensitivity, tenderness, sweetness, childhood, femininity and the romantic. A combination of pink and white is associated with chastity and innocence, whereas a combination of pink and black links to eroticism and seduction. One can choose pink as they feel like it.

This Valentine's Day, lovers in Japan can present the object of their affection with a world first — naturally bright pink chocolate. The KitKat store in the glitzy shopping area of Ginza in Tokyo is a riot of wall-to-wall pink. And the salespeople have chosen their moment wisely: Valentine's Day is a massive business in Japan. In India some religious groups objected to Valentine's day celebrations in India and considered sending pink undergarments to show their resentment on such social celebrations. Thus pink assumed great

importance and garment showrooms display pink attire on their frontal display board to attract their clients.

Pink, a delicate color that means sweet, nice, playful, cute, romantic, charming, feminine, and tenderness, is associated with bubble gum, flowers, babies, little girls, cotton candy, and sweetness. The color pink is the color of universal love of oneself and it is a peculiar one. Both red and pink represent love and the young generation love to wear those colours when they go for an outing as these colours bring out the best picture for posting in social media and get the maximum likes. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy; while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl. Dress designers like pink much like all colors, and are considered gender-interchangeable throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Pink in its conventional avatar has connoted romance and femininity, so it is used extensively by brands of feminine perfumes, cosmetics and accessories. Pink is also the colour of babies and gentle feelings, so a natural colour for baby brands such as Johnson and Johnson. Adult male brands have tended to keep away from pink for these very reasons, and also because pink has been considered the signature colour of the gay community. But this is changing fast. In recent years, pink is emerging as a cool colour which conveys new-age values to young consumers. Because it is used by few brands today, it can also serve as an immediate differentiator. For marketers who are willing to take courage, pink is certainly a colour to ponder over for your next offering.

Johnson and Johnson's Dumex baby soap was pink in colour to attract young ones to go for a happy bath.



More than 50 pink colours are prevailing with different shades and texture. Pink colour brings serenity to the life of women and men love to see them in pink attire for the sake pleasure. The transition to pink as a sexually differentiating color for girls occurred gradually, through the selective process of the marketplace, in the 1930s and 40s. In the 1920s, some groups had been describing pink as a masculine color, an equivalent of the red that was considered to be for men, but lighter for boys. But stores nonetheless found that people were increasingly choosing to buy pink for girls, and blue for boys, until this became an accepted norm in the 1940s.

As long as you are aware of how different work environments have a different way of dressing and in the daily routine pink occupies the top spot and women love to wear their favorite colour and pink is the best suited for them. A pleasing colour like pink pays well for your appearance and brings about a sea change in your dress sense as well.

—C.K. SUBRAMANIAM

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Festivals are the carriers of peace and joy

Festivals are the carriers of peace and joy in all communities. All nations of the world have certain religious and cultural festivals. However, India is one of the largest countries to celebrate numerous festivals. As India is a very cultural and diverse country, so are the festivals. They divide into three general categories of national, religious and seasonal.

As we can divide the Indian festivals into national, religious and seasonal, we see how they differ from each other. In general, national festivals are celebrated in honor of reputable people and events. The religious ones follow legends of faiths and their beliefs. The seasonal ones are celebrated with each season that we experience that varies from region to region.

The national festivals include Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti and many more. These festivals are celebrated all over India. All the citizens of the country celebrate them irrespective of the religion, caste, creed, colour and sex. Everyone celebrates them with great patriotism. These festivals are gazetted holidays all over the country and are enjoyed with great enthusiasm.

Moreover, they help in setting aside the differences of the countrymen and unite each other like never before. The capital of India, New Delhi, is the seat of national festivals. For instance, it witnesses the grand parade of the Republic Day. The flag hoisting takes place in New Delhi, which is broadcasted live on national television for the whole country to see.

The religious festivals are one of the most famous festivals, not only throughout India, but all over the world. Some of the most prominent religious



festivals are Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Dussehra, Eid-ul-fitr, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Guru Nanak Jayanti and Holi.

Diwali and Holi are the most prominent festivals in Hinduism. They are very colourful and full of lights.

Eid-ul-fitr is an Islamic festival which celebrates the end of Ramadan. It is about delectable dishes and family gatherings. Christmas celebrates the birthday of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. It is also about Christmas trees and Santa Claus.

Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrates the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism.

Bihu is a festival of Assam. Likewise, Tamil Nadu celebrates Pongal and Kerala celebrates Onam. In addition, there is Basant Panchami which people celebrate throughout North India and West Bengal as well.

Festivals are very important. They make us forget our cultural and religious differences. They unite people and they come together for the sole purpose of celebration and happiness. Other than that, festivals also help us embrace our culture and religion. They are very helpful in breaking the monotony of life.

Moreover, people look forward to festivals all around the year. Festivals spark joy and give people something to look forward to. In addition, people also repair their homes and paint them that look like brand new. It beautifies the look of the locality.

In short, festivals fill our lives with colours and enthusiasm. They bring us closer every year and eliminate any feelings of communal hatred. They also strengthen the bonds of the community and remove the malice from people's hearts. Therefore, festivals are quite important and must be celebrated with great joy and passion.

— Jubel D'Cruz

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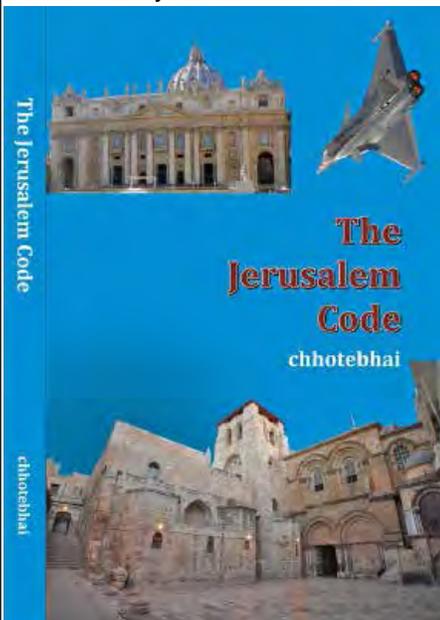
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Matrimonials

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7271. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1991), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 69 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, smart, active. Edn. B.Sc., in Hospitality Administration and Management, working as a Manager - Administration Facilities. Contact email :

allyrocks91@gmail.com

7259. USA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1994), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working. Contact email : sevu.sequeira@gmail.com

7128. MUMBAI : Affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, (Born in 12-04-1988), Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. Edn. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : drvd2019@gmail.com

7126. U.S.A. : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1992) from Mumbai, Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. (Computers) from Mumbai, M.S. (Information Systems) from US. Possesses H1B visa and is working as a Technical Analyst with an MNC in USA. Contact email : wilfyjoy1315@gmail.com or call +91 98603 02527 / + 91 9970172527

7258. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1993), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Post Graduate, Content Professional in a reputed MNC and freelancing as a copywriter ad social media Professional. Contact email : forheralliance@gmail.com

7244. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 54 kgs, Edn. Chartered Accountant and M.Com., Employed in one of the Top reputed companies in Mumbai. Well cultured and good family background. Only Child. Contact email :

fionadesouza18@gmail.com

7199. BANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 53 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Master's in Mass Communications (NTU, Singapore) working as a Senior Manager of Corporate Communi-

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7243. NEW ZEALAND : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1996), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Nursing, Profession : Staff Nurse. Ready to settle in New Zealand. Contact email :

sales@nomaplastechind.in

7066. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E., (EXTC) M.S. (International Business Management), working as a Consulting Manager. Contact email : l2018anselm@yahoo.com

7240. PUNE : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1987), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Very Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a Finance Executive. Contact email :

angelina0134@gmail.com

7234. MANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1993), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBBS, MD (ongoing), Doctor by profession. Contact email : samaddy2013@gmail.com

7230. MUMBAI : Silm, Smart, Beautiful Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1995), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working in Pharmaceutical Company. Contact email : alex1947@rediffmail.com

7065. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1989), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 69 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., & Dip. in Clinical Research, working as Business Process Lead in TCS. Contact email :

mendonca_luke@yahoo.co.in

7214. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1986), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 52 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. CA CFA Ms Finance M.Com., working as a Senior Manager. Contact email : frfernandes020@gmail.com

7182. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., C.A., working as Asst. Manager in TATA Company. Contact : email :

matrimonialp27@gmail.com

7160. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, working as a Senior Merchandiser in a Global Retail Company in Dubai. Contact email : prislobo10@gmail.com

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

7265. MUMBAI : Mumbai born and broughtup Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1993), Ht. 6', Wt. 85 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. ME M Tech., Construction Management, currently working as an Asst. Manager L&T in Ahmedabad. Contact email : jovelpicardo@gmail.com

7185. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1984) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Bank. Contact email : shaun.neo00@oulook.com

6885. USA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1986), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. (I.T.), University of Mumbai, Executive MBA University of Utah - USA, Job : Senior Director of Software Automation in USA. Currently he his in Mumbai. Contact Email :

jane_3105@yahoo.co.in

7281. NAGPUR : Anglo Indian Roman Catholic Handsome Bachelor, (Born in September 1968), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., MBA., working as a Supervisor. Contact email : renedennis149@gmail.com

7226. CANADA : Canadian Citizen Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 59 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., in Environmental Science and in Energy Management postgraduate degrees from the University of Toronto. Working for a reputed company as Energy Management Analyst in Totonto. Contact email : francisper@gmail.com

7280. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in December 1972), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 72 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Manager. Contact email : fernsjohn100@gmail.com

7263. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 6', Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA - Human

Resource Development Management, working at a Mutual Company. Contact email : joulem15@gmail.com

7270. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1988), Ht. 4' 11", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Diploma Holder, 3 year diploma in chefs management (culturaly mgmt), working as a Sous chef - (Managerial Position) Contact email : kgama@aih.edu.in

7257. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1991), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 74 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDM Marketing, Occupation : Marketing Professional. Contact email : craig_v@hotmail.com

7249. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in November 1956), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. S.Y.B.A., Retired and well settled. Contact Mob.: 9221792354 or Email : collinmonteiro58@yahoo.com

7242. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MCA / MCS, working as a Software Developer. Contact email : mayapereira_2000@yahoo.com

7241. POONA : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Post Graduation Banking and Finance, working for Bank. Contact email : matri0688@yahoo.com

7237. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1990), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M. Eng., MBA., PGDM., working as an Asst. Engg. Manager. Contact email : danny Pinto@gmail.com

7225. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1994), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. INFT, Profession : Database Developer.

Contact email : allan.jones.137@gmail.com

7212. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1991), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Bachelor of Arts, B.H.M.S., Luzern, Switzerland, working as a Restaurant Supervisor. Contact email : noellyn_p@hotmail.com

7218. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1988), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Aviation, working as a Commercial Pilot. 1st Officer. Contact email : dcostajess@gmail.com

7213. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 6', Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. in Hospitality Studies, working in a reputed organization. Contact email : merwyn1989pinto@gmail.com

7202. MUMBAI : Keralite Syrian Catholic Bachelor (Born in May 1973), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 73 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., English Literature, Profession : Consultant Administration. Left Hand & Leg is weak due to earlier motor bike accident. Contact Email :

josephmullakara1973@gmail.com

7196. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor (Born in March 1981), Ht. 6', Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., HR Professional. Contact email : denstun@hotmail.com

7183. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1991) Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 86 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDM and BMS., working as a Relationship Manager. Contact email : ritadhawan10@gmail.com

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doreen.veigas@gmail.com

7228. KOLKATA : Anglo Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1988), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Good looking, Smart, Edn. B.A., working as a HR. Contact email :

advresponse85@gmail.com

7235. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1991), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 90 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., Asst. Professor by profession. Contact email : jane 21fds@gmail.com

7215. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1996), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 54 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, CWM, pursuing CFA Level 2, working as a Operations Analyst in Limited Company. Contact email :

rachel.serrao96@gmail.com

7223. MUMBAI : Born Again Spinster, (Born in November 1994), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Masters in HR. working as Asst. Manager Learning and Development in Cargo Logistics firm. Seeks suitable match, first preference Born Again or Others. Contact email : bernie_wicket@yahoo.com

7222. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1984), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as accountant. Contact email : josephppereira@gmail.com

7239. CANADA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in February 1992), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Com-

pleted Bachelor of Electical Engineering in Toronto. working at a MNC in Toronto. Contact email :

walkdowntheaisle2@gmail.com

7229. UAE : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1994), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Good looking, Smart, Edn. PGDM, working as a Human Resource. Seeks a suitable match from Dubai Or Canada. Contact email : goanmatri7@gmail.com

7217. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in June 1995), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 77 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., & Post Graduate Diploma in Event Management, working in an reputed Multinational Company. Contact email : naseemdmello786@gmail.com

7209. MUMBAI : Goan RC Spinster, (Born in October 1986), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 100 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.A., & PG HR, working as a Trainer. Contact email : sweetroan17@gmail.com

7193. MUMBAI : East Indian RC Spinster, (Born in August 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., M.A., B.Ed., working as a Teacher in **DUBAI**. Contact email : marina.rodrigues1954@gmail.com

7205. NEW DELHI : Goan RC Spinster, (Born in December 1996), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 38 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BDS, Bachelor in Dental Surgery, woking as a Dental Doctor in **PUNE**. Contact email :

mariadcosta0505@gmail.com

7186. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1991), Ht. 5', Wt. 40 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., working for an MNC. Contact email : dyna911@gmail.com

7197. MUMBAI : Goan RC Spinster, (Born in April 1995), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate & pursuing MBA in Hotel and Tourism, working as a Travel Executive in Sharp Travel Private Limited. Contact

email :

joseph.monteiro84@yahoo.com
Mob. : 9869860580.

7181. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, issueless (Born in April 1974), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a H.R. Contact email : roopaferns@yahoo.co.in

7195. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 57 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., well settled. Contact email :

melinda.522@gmail.com OR

Mob.: 9820561036

7179. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in May 1994), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 45 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Bachelor of Pharmacy, working in an MNC as a Project Lead. Contact email : lin.r80@yahoo.com

7171 MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1994), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as an Analyst. Contact email :

patriciaswamy94@gmail.com

7170 MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in August 1996), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 80 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working for Bank. Contact email : jenniferdmello25@gmail.com

7169 MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1992), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA in Event Management. Contact email :

rosypetters74@gmail.com

7204. MUMBAI : Goan RC Spinster (Born in October 1989), Ht. 4' 11", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, PGD in Broadcast Journalism, working for National News Channel in **BANGALORE**. Contact email : stacypereira89@gmail.com

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Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, 30 years, Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 79 kgs, Edn. B.Tech (Mech), Director in Family Business. Only Child. **(P 2310)**

Mumbai based Roman Catholic Bachelor, 31 years, Handsome, Edn. Masters in MBA Finance, Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 70 kgs, well cultured, Postition : Senior Manager Finance International Trading in MNC. **(P2301)**

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Mumbai born and brought up, Silm, Smart, Beautiful Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1995), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working in Pharmaceutical Company. **(Box No. 7230)**

Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1994), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, beautiful, Coming from business family, Edn. Chartered Accountant, C.A. by Profession. **(Box No. 7210)**

Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E., (EXTC) M.S. (International Business Management), working as a Consulting Manager. **(Box No. 7066)**

Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1989), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 69 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., & Dip. in Clinical Research, working as Business Process Lead in TCS. **(Box No. 7065)**

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