



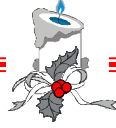
REDEMPTORIST PARISH BULLETIN (Private Circulation only) Dec 2004 Vol. XI/4

*Creative things the community can do at Christmas time.*

1. Put up a Christmas tree in a significant place of your area. Ask every family in the community to write the family names on a coloured paper and fix it on the tree.
2. Encourage a Community CRIB at a prominent place in the community.
3. Visit all the sick and elderly people in your community.
4. Adjacent to the Community Crib or Tree, put up a chart paper or a white cloth fixed on a wall. Write.... FOR ME, CHRISTMAS MEANS..... and invite the community members to think of different yet meaningful phrases/slogans to complete the sentence.
5. Visit bereaved families in your constituency.
6. As a community, visit any street children's home, home for the aged, orphanage, etc.
7. Moderate size stars from every community to form a garland at the entrance of the church.
8. Celebrate Christmas with songs, games, and mingling with children of all faiths in the neighbourhood.

*Leaders Link  
(No. 50, Dec. '04 – Jan. '05)*





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## *Christmas is possible because ....*

A Virgin named Mary said YES!  
This is possibly how most of us would respond to an opinion poll on...

***Who made Christmas possible?  
Who is responsible for Christmas?***

A second opinion could possibly be, because Anna and Joachim had a baby girl named Mary. That would indicate that Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, is a matter of 'Luck by Chance'.

God's plans do not hinge on such flimsy circumstances. His Word stands fixed in the Heavens. What He purposes He fulfills and nothing and nobody can frustrate His will and purpose. Period.

Mary could have said 'No'. God's plan of salvation, which He spoke in the Garden of Eden, (Gen 3/15) after disobedience and rebellion of the first ever man and woman, our first parents Adam and Eve, would still be on track. It wouldn't be derailed.

Gen 3/15 "and I will put enmity between you and the Woman. And between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your head, and you shall bruise His heel".

From the beginning of eternity God knew. The all-seeing God knew exactly what He was promising, (the first Messianic promise) and how he would achieve it.

Jer 1/5 "Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee. Before thou wast born I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet to the nations." What is true of Jeremiah is true also of Mary and each of us. God's plan for each of us may vary but His purpose of salvation is the same for all.

From eternity Mary existed in the mind and will of the Almighty God. She was specially prepared for her role in the Salvation Drama. She didn't just happen on the sets. God carefully and lovingly crafted her in the womb of her mother Anna. He preponed the merits of His Son's crucifixion, passion, death and resurrection and applied Christ's merits to Mary at her conception in her mother's womb. She is the Immaculate Conception.



*Merry Christmas*

God chose the womb of an ordinary middle class woman, making sure of her poverty of spirit, her holiness and faithfulness – her fear of God – The fear of God is indispensable if we want to be pleasing to God and used by God. He processed through generations of humans, the kind of woman he desired – Mary, who finally emerged – pure and immaculate and full of grace. One may say He distilled her, as we distil water for the purpose of making it free of impurities.

God did not need Mary. He could have achieved our salvation any other way. God did not need her consent either. He could

have sent his orders and make known his will. No – No! God doesn't work that way.

From the very beginning He gave man free will and choice. We were to love and serve Him of our own free will or not at all. So He respected Mary's freedom and graciously "announced" His plan through His Angel Gabriel.

"O highly favoured One". Make no mistake it was a divine favour; God was bestowing on Mary the favour of complying and cooperating with His will. It was not the other way round. Luke 1/31 – "And behold, Thou shall conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and of His Kingdom there will be no end" YES or NO?

"Gloria in excelsis Deo" and to you dear Reader "PEACE:.

"For to us a child is born

To us a son is given

And the government will be on his shoulders

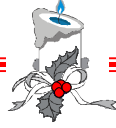
And he will be called

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Is.9/6-7)

SHALOM!

*Ena Carvalho*



## *Through the eyes of a Mother....*

I still remember that cold & lonely night. The night my little son was born. My son, whom I was to call, Jesus. It all happened as it was told to me by the Angel Gabriel on the day I conceived him. I was now no longer an ordinary girl living in some tiny village but I was the one God had chosen to give birth to his only Son. I was the Mother of God, the Saviour of the world!



He was so tiny. So divine. His eyes sparkled in glory and he smiled with a smile so kind and loving. I touched his tiny hands, hands that would cure, His tiny feet which had a long long way to go. He was so calm, so quiet, he seemed to know what life was all about! His face shone with glory and divinity.

My husband, Joseph and I struggled to get him some clothing in that small little manger. We feared for his safety. Just then, we had some visitors who were guided by a star and who had come to worship the little baby Jesus.

There were 3 Kings who brought him, the little Lord, gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Some shepherds also came to see him. That night was the most beautiful, calm and holy night ever! That was the night the Lord was born!

As the days passed, I realized how wonderful it felt to be the mother of this child. He was God, yet he was so humble, so kind, so much like an ordinary human being. He could feel pain, happiness, bore illnesses yet NEVER complained! I remember the first time he addressed me as, "Mother". Yes, I was his mother. I was the Mother of God!

As the years went by, he grew up to be a handsome and strong young man who would listen to every word I said and would help his father with his carpentry work. Now, he began to spend more time in the temple listening as well as preaching to the priest there. I can still picture the crowds that came to listen to him. He preached, he prayed and cured people. He had begun the work; his father had sent him for. He loved little children and would spend hours playing with them and talking to them. He had devoted his entire life in the service and upliftment of mankind!

Then came the day I feared since the day of his birth. It was time for him to go. Betrayed by his own disciple, Judas, he was dragged for trial and was falsely accused of blasphemy and was even blamed for misguiding the people. He was mocked at, was beaten up and was stripped of his garments. He was insulted, rebuked and tortured. All this while, I stood there weeping as my son was being crucified by his own people. I felt so helpless as I watched my Son go through so much of suffering.

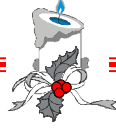
He was hurt, he was bleeding, he was hungry, he was dying. I failed to understand why, Why did he, God himself, have to undergo this misery? He could have saved himself but he did not. He could have escaped the pain but he did not. He bore all the pain just for our sake. I stood there, seeing him suffer, I could hear him cry in pain as he was whipped and beaten and I could hear him wince in pain as they hammered nails into his palms. I saw them placing a crown of thorns on his head. A crown of thorns! He was God yet he wore a crown of thorns and not of jewels!

Yet I could see him praying to his father. He prayed to forgive those who had hurt him, he prayed to forgive mankind all their sins. I could feel his love for humanity. Finally, I saw him breathe his last. He was dead. My son, the Lord Jesus, was dead... He had fulfilled the promise he had made to his father.

Now, I see him in front of me again. Yes, he has risen. He has risen to life! Now, I realize how much he loves the world. I realize how little my love for him is compared to his immense love and forgiveness for the world. He came into this world and gave up his life to save us.

I feel blessed, I feel honoured. I thank God for giving me the privilege to give birth to his only Son who was born to free us from sin. He died and has risen to everlasting life to save all, ALL of us unworthy mortals whom he loves so immensely....

*Danielle Moniz*



## *Exhibition on the Eucharist through the ages.*

The OLPS Sunday School students held an exhibition on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2004 after the morning masses depicting the progress of the church from the birth of Jesus Christ till today.



Each standard was assigned 500 years (5 centuries). The exhibition was informative and the parishioners learnt about the various articles used throughout the 2000 years gone by. They showed the church and its architecture and the changes.

They showed how in the beginning the mass was held in people's houses because of the few number of Christians. The Eucharist & the wine as well as its vessels were shown. The priest's garments were displayed. Information about each of the exhibits was given by the students themselves acting as tour guides and being quite good at it, too.

At the end of this short but sweet exhibition, the parishioners learnt a lot about the church and left feeling closer to the Eucharist.

Some of the comments received from the visitors were:

\* Congratulations! Happy to note that the students have gained a lot of knowledge through this exhibition - *Sr. Shalini*

\* Awesome, hats off to all the children and teachers for the effort taken – very informative - *Maryn Daniel*

\* It gave a clear picture of the church and altar from the 1<sup>st</sup> century till now. It was really nice to know about our church & priests in the early centuries – *Sarna Lobo*

\* Well done! It was good to see that the children learnt their parts...we too learnt a lot. Very informative and instructional - *Leela Moraes*

\* Great job done by the kids. I admire their enthusiasm and joy in presenting - *R. Roy*

\* Very much impressed with the knowledge and understanding of the little ones. Congratulations to the teachers - *Vincent Coutinho*

\* Very well put up, lots of effort and pains have been taken. Such an informative exhibition. Congrats, dear teachers and children. Do keep up the good work - *Ruby Johnson*

\* Congrats! The Sunday School has done excellent work & exhibited a lot of talent & effort - *Sr. Sangota*

*Samantha Roy*  
(9<sup>th</sup> Std.)

## *My Morning Prayers*

O God, this morning I have come into the quietness of your presence  
To begin the day so that out of this moment.

I may take with me a quiet serenity which will last me through the  
Rough and tumble of this day's life.

I have come to find WISDOM so that today I may not make any  
Foolish mistakes.

I have come to find PEACE, so that nothing may worry or upset me  
All through this day.

I have come to find LOVE, that all through today nothing may make  
Me bitter or unforgiving or unkind.

I have come to begin the day with you, to continue it with you, and  
To end it with you.

So that it will be a day which will have in it nothing to regret.

Hear this morning prayer for JESUS' sake.

AMEN





## *Unity, Chaos... & ... fun at the OLP's Food Festival*

The announcement at the Sunday Mass that week proclaimed: "Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2004, is to be celebrated as "**Parishioners' Unity Day**" and a food festival will be held that day. The ladies in the parish will be on strike...!"

Wait a minute, I'm going ahead of myself! Before the dynamic PPC chairperson released this catchy notice, it all started with the parish priest expressing interest in organizing a food festival to commemorate Unity Day and simultaneously raise funds for the church building maintenance as a 2-pronged strategy. He received the desired support of the PPC members and they worked like a dream team to fulfill this endeavor. It was perceived as an opportunity to encourage increased participation in parish activities.

The food festival was organized with detailed planning – the quality of food, different cuisine (Mughlai, Chinese, Ethnic), the pricing, and food sponsorships from each SCC – right from breakfast through lunch. There was hectic activity and co-ordination with different committees working late nights to bring this food festival to the parishioners.

The day finally dawned – bright and sunny. The parish priest declared the festival open by blessing the site of the festival and the food at 7 a.m.

Well, as you are all aware, the parishioners responded with true unity and came out in large numbers...the notice of the strike was upheld by the ladies' of the parish !! There was chaos all right, as all made a beeline at the food counters to relish the mouth-watering *samosa*, *biryani*, *vindaloo*, *sannas* & topped off with the deliciously creamy *kulfi*. The tastebuds and tummies were taken on a journey of delicious proportions! The food was cleaned out in a span of 45 minutes – it was obvious that the people came bringing along their awesome appetites. Unfortunately, some parishioners did go hungry that day – but that was a sign of the overwhelming response to the food festival. It also netted an amount of Rs. 57,950/- towards the church maintenance fund.

The food festival was successful in bringing the communities together for good food and fun and we hope that there will be more such activities planned in the future.

*Christopher Jude*

*Our Lady of Victories Small Christian Community*

## *Your response to our Questions*

A questionnaire was circulated with the previous issue (Sept 2004) of the Perpetual Quest. The objective was to get some feedback from you, our Readers, as to what you would like to read in the Perpetual Quest. Here is a summary of the feedback that we received:

Number of Questionnaires that we received back : **30**

*Q. In your family, who reads the Perpetual Quest regularly?*

A. The Quest is read mainly by Parents, having children who are in their Teens or older. The Aged also read the Quest. Youth and Young adults do not appear to read the Quest often.

*Q. Which type of articles appeal to you and are thought-provoking?*

A. Articles covering various aspects of life as a Christian are the most thought-provoking. Such articles aim to guide us in living out our Christian faith in today's world. The Editorial, which is theme-based is also well-read.

*Q. Should each issue of the Quest have a specific theme?*

A. Yes.

*Q. What type of topics should be covered in detail in the Quest?*

A. The top 3 topics that our readers feel should be covered in great detail are:

- (i) Reports on Parish & Neighbourhood activities and happenings
- (ii) Problems faced by the Family and Youth in today's world
- (iii) Ways of incorporating our Christian faith into our Daily living.

It is felt that the Quest should contain comprehensive information about the various happenings in the Parish, and Neighbourhoods. But it should go beyond mere reporting, and should also provide useful reading and guidance for the Youth and the Family.

The Quest should also cover social and civic issues pertaining to our responsibility as citizens. Any services which are provided by Parishioners, like catering, tuitions etc., should also be covered in the Quest.

*Contd on pg 6*



## *Kuch Kuch Ho Raha Hai*

### **Small Christian Communities: Update**

Following is the brief report of the events in the 22 Small Christian Communities (SCC) of our Parish for the period October 2004 to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

- \* Holy Hour in the Church is conducted by various SCCs every First Friday of the Month.
- \* Many communities had a follow up prayer service for confirmation students. Also one community conducted the Intercessory prayer service for children, youth, adult, sick and old of their community. One community also discussed the paper "Family Conflicts".
- \* One more community has decided to fund the education of a child of Sevadaan Special School. This is the third community which has contributed towards Sevadaan.
- \* Visits were made to the families of the neighbourhood, to the sick and the old. Also visits were made to the new families in the community.
- \* In the month of October and November, most communities conducted Home-to-Home Rosary along with Candlelit procession in their neighbourhood, concluding with a Holy Eucharist and a Get-together. Also, Rosary was conducted in the Church daily by various SCC.
- \* One community organized and participated in the Garba Dance, a day before the Dassera, for the Non-Christian brethren of their community. They also organized and conducted the Diwali Party on the occasion of Diwali.
- \* "Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2004, was celebrated as "Parishioners' Unity Day" and all the 22 SCCs participated in the food festival which was a great success. This festival was organized with detailed planning – the quality of food, different cuisine (Mughlai, Chinese, Ethnic), the pricing, and food sponsorships from each SCC – right from breakfast through lunch. The parishioners responded with true unity and came out in large numbers
- \* One Community celebrated their community Feast of St. Francis Xavier by distributing bookmarks to all the families of their community.

*Wilson U. Patrao*

### **Your response to the our Questions** *Contd from pg 5*

*Q. Should the Quest continue to remain as a Quarterly newsletter or should it be more frequent?*

A. A majority have responded that the Quest should continue to remain Quarterly.

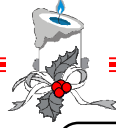
*Q. Have any of the Articles from the Quest been fit for discussion in your family or neighbourhood?*

A. Almost half of the responses have been in the affirmative. This is something that the Editorial team has found heartening, as it is the aim of the Quest team that topics covered in the Newsletter should be thought about and discussed further by our readers. It is the commitment of the Editorial Team to ensure that even more thought-provoking topics are covered.

### **Conclusions**

- 1) From the small number of responses that have been received, it is clear that the Quest is not a widely read newsletter, and secondly it is read mainly by the Elderly. There could be many reasons for the lower readership, but some that come out strongly are that topics that are relevant to large sections of our Parish, namely the Youth, Young adults, and Families are not covered in an appropriate manner. The Editorial Team will definitely cover topics that are relevant to these sections of our Parish in subsequent issues.
- 2) Our readers definitely prefer the Quest to be 'Theme-based'. From our next issue onwards, we will be informing you about the Theme for the next issue. We expect you, as a reader of the Quest, to then give in your contributions and your opinions on the theme.
- 3) Our readers love thought-provoking topics – topics that they can reflect upon and discuss further. We need to know what specific topics you would like covered in the Quest. Please give in your topics.
- 4) The Quest should cover the various Parish activities in detail. Also, neighbourhood activities should be covered. Organisers and people involved in various Parish activities, please send in your contributions for the same – please do not wait to be requested. We want to cover everything in the Quest, but we need you to give in your contributions.
- 5) Lastly, please remember that the Perpetual Quest is your newsletter. To make it useful, you need to read it regularly and give in your contributions and your feedback. Also, people who are interested in joining the Editorial Team, please do get in touch with us.

*Perpetual Quest Editorial Team*



## Christmas Programme

### Penitential Service

#### Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> Dec.

6.40 p.m. Prayer Service.  
Confessions outside the Church  
7.00 p.m. Mass as usual

*Please note : Confessions for school children will be held during school hours.*

#### Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> Dec. to Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> Dec.

6.30 p.m. - 7.00 p.m. ) Confessions  
7.30 p.m. - 8.00 p.m. )

#### Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. to Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec.

5.00 p.m. - 7.00 p.m. ) Confessions  
8.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. )

#### Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> Dec.

### No Evening Mass.

**Christmas Service** : Carol singing at 8.00 pm followed by X'mas Service on the grounds.

#### Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> Dec.

### Christmas Day Masses

6.30 am, 7.30 am, 8.30 am & 9.30 am.  
7.00 pm - Mass as usual.

#### Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> Dec.

### No Evening Mass

Thanksgiving hour by Charismatic Group - 11.00pm -12.00  
New Year's mass at 12.00 midnight in the Church.

#### Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> Jan.

### New Year's Day Masses

6.30 am, 7.30 am, 8.30 am & 9.30 am.  
7.00 pm - Mass as usual.

## Reflections

So many people are waiting for so many things. We wait at railway stations and airports for the arrival of loved ones or business associates. So many people have been waiting for news of a loved one missing. There are more and more people waiting for a job. Many young people agonize as they wait for exam results; many of us are filled with anxiety as we wait for results of medical tests at the hospital.

*How are we waiting for Christmas / New Year?*

*With what feeling?*

*We say we are waiting for the Prince of Peace. What effect does our faith really have on our everyday fears and anxieties?*

*Does our relationship with God pull us through these difficult times of uncertain safety and security?*

*Do our fears make us more self-centered or push us to help others in difficulties?*

**Leaders Link**  
(No. 50, Dec. '04 – Jan. '05)

