

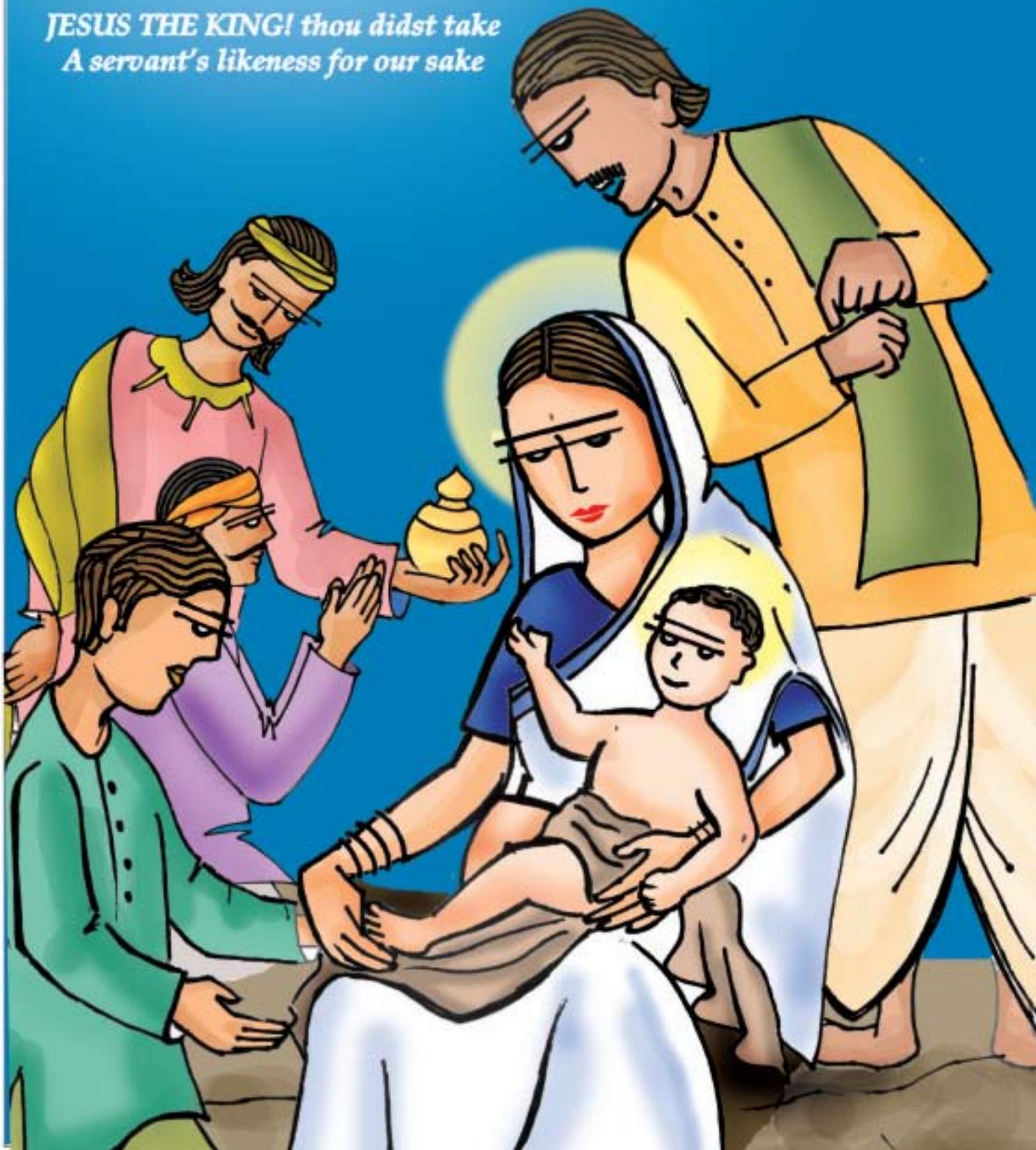
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AGNEL

ashram News

DECEMBER - 2010

*JESUS THE KING! thou didst take
A servant's likeness for our sake*



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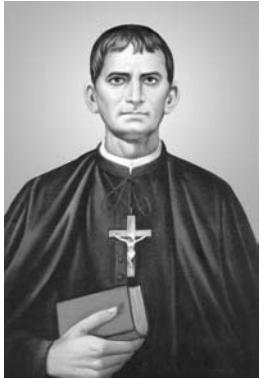
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21st January 2011
Ven. Fr. Agnel Jayanti
at Fr. Agnel Ashram,
Bandra (W),
Mumbai - 400 050.

PROGRAMME
SPECIAL NOVENA SERVICE
From, 12th to 20th January 2011

Every Day

Morning : 7.00 a.m. & 7.30 a.m. : Holy Mass and Novena Prayer in English followed by blessing with the Relic.

Evening : 5.30 p.m. : Novena Service in Konkani, Marathi & Gujarathi followed by blessing with the Relic.
6.00 p.m.: Holy Mass and Novena Prayer in English followed by blessing with the Relic.

N.B.

On Sunday 16th January all Masses and Novena Services will be held as on normal Sundays.

**21 January (Friday):
141th Birth Anniversary of Venerable Fr. Agnel**

Morning : Masses followed by Prayers for favors and blessings with the Relic at 6.30, 7.30, 8.00 in English and 10.30 in Tamil.
Evening : Solemn Concelebrated Mass will be held at 6.00 p.m. in the Ashram Compound followed by prayers for favors.

Thousands of devotees will participate in this Annual Novena and Celebration. Over one lakh of favours, some of them truly miraculous such as cure of cancer, T.B., Paralysis etc. have been received through the powerful intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel.

Favours obtained and petitions to be placed at the Shrine of Ven. Fr. Agnel may be sent to the following address :

Rev. Fr. Superior.
Fr. Agnel Ashram
Bandstand, Bandra (W),
Mumbai - 400 050. India.

Bus No. 211 Special Bus Service to Ply From Bandra Railway Station to Fr. Agnel Ashram Gate.

From the Editor's Desk

'THE KING' who was born to empty himself

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”. The Gospel of Luke presents most beautifully the biblical account of the birth of Jesus.

For every Christian the origin of Christmas is, and should be the birth of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible. Nothing more and nothing less. However, most of what we witness of December 25th has little to do with that blessed day. Most of the traditions and customs of Christmas actually predate the birth of Jesus and obviously downright deceptive in their meaning and origin. Conveniently, some pagan traditions have been adopted by Christians.

For each one of us Christmas is a wonderful reminder of Christ's humble beginning as a human child in this world.

Luke tells us that when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem there was no room for them in the inn. Mary gave birth to her Son who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger. Jesus lived a life of poverty. His own earthly Mother and foster father were poor. He was born in utter poverty. In flesh He emptied Himself of his riches. He chose to endure such humble poverty to redeem us. Paul affirms in Phil 2:7 “he took upon himself the form of a servant”

Jesus had no home (lk9:58). He wanted to be dependent on the charity of his few friends that He drew around him. As He was dying He commended His mother to the charitable attention of his disciple John. At the end, all his personal property seems to have been the raiment He wore and which was divided among the soldiers that crucified Him. Christ, the King of Kings, had power to choose the manner in which He would live. He might have bequeathed riches greater than Solomon. But positively He chose

not to do it. Proverbs 13: says “Some rich people are poor and poor people have great wealth” Indeed, the so called rich can be spiritually bankrupt, while not few poor people are rich in contentment and satisfaction.

The book of Revelation 3:7 describes being rich as “having need of nothing”. That's precisely how God is rich, thus “He has need of nothing”. And Paul points out so meaningfully in 2Cor.8:9 “Though the Lord Jesus Christ was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich”

Christmas can be defined as an absolute and selfless generosity. Not the generosity of material presents, rather the generosity of your loving presence. Yes, the presence of your loving soul pouring out LOVE generously and unconditionally on another

.Only such presence can last for all time, this alone you will carry beyond this life.

I am sure each one of us can remember such genuine loving presence from our childhood. Perhaps our grandmother, our uncle or a friend, someone who saw us as truly we are and has touched our soul. Someone knowing you deeply loved you, encouraged you and connected you to some good place within yourself thus reinforcing your own awareness of the goodness within you.

This is the highest gift of our Christmas giving: to discover the goodness in another, recognize and acknowledge it and reflect this goodness back to them. A loving look, a kind gesture, a warm embrace, a word of encouragement make us realize that ABBA our Father loved us so much that HE gave His beloved Son to unite us all as the members of one family, loved and cherished by our Creator.

- Fr. Ubaldo Fernandes, sfx

25th December: The Birthday of the Unconquered One

- Fr. F. Diniz

Was Jesus really born on 25th December? During the first two centuries of Christianity there is no mention of any Christmas celebration. In those days birthday celebrations had a very dubious reputation. There were also birthday celebrations of Gods which also enjoyed similar reputation. Commenting on this Origen said: "Sinners alone, not saints celebrate their birthdays."

The birth of Christ was a great spiritual event. It had also a message of great value to all the people of the world; hence it deserved to be celebrated. On the very night Jesus was born an Angel had announced to the group of shepherds who were keeping vigil on their flocks: "Listen, I bring you news of great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord." On the occasion of his Presentation in the Temple on the 40th day of his birth Jesus had been proclaimed as the Light to enlighten the nations. Guided by a star wise men from far away East had come to worship him. All these events had an universal salvific value, which had to be pondered on.

Christian people wanted an occasion to celebrate those events. Hence they wished that the birthday of Christ should be celebrated. But no one knew for sure the exact date of the birth of Christ, as neither the Gospels nor the tradition of the first two centuries made any mention of it.

The first evidence of Christmas celebration is in the year 200, in Egypt and the date for it as mentioned by Clement of Alexandria was 20th May. During the 3rd century Christmas was celebrated in various parts of the Christian world; but as a recent survey has shown there was



no month of the year in which Christmas was not celebrated by one Church or another.

A great need was felt for a common date for the celebration of Christmas in all parts of the world. In the middle of the 4th century Christmas was celebrated in Rome on 25th December, the day of the winter solstice. Earlier when the Roman religion prevailed in the Roman Empire the day of the winter solstice

was celebrated as the birthday of the Sun God. By the middle of the 4th century the Roman religion had died out; Christian religion prevailed and the worship of Sun God disappeared.

The story of how the Sun God was being gradually vanquished during the long winter season and then found its new birth on 25th December and consequently gave new hope of a warm new life, fascinated the minds of the people.

The Roman clergy and the Pope found it convenient to fix 25th December as the date of the birth of Christ. The new birth of the Sun and the progressive growth of sunshine in the spring and summer would be a model of what should happen in the life of Christians when Jesus Christ is born in their hearts. 25th December was called the birthday of the Unconquered One meaning that the Sun was not vanquished by the cold season of the winter. Jesus too was called the Sun of justice who could not be conquered by death.

The Roman custom of celebrating Christmas on 25th December was adopted by the Church at Constantinople the second capital of the Roman Empire by the end of the 4th century and was well accepted by the people. Almost at the

Contd. on pg 7

True Spirit Of Christmas

- P.K. Ravindranath

Christmas is celebrated world wide not merely by the one billion adherents or the faith propagated by Jesus Christ but also by a vast majority of the other give billion people. This is remarkable, since the devotion and gaiety of various churches are shared by others who do not subscribe to the same beliefs and faith.

In India, Christmas is celebrated in very demonstrable ways by Hindus, Muslims and others. India, traditionally, has been most tolerant to the beliefs and religions of others, however different it might have been to local religions. Thus, when St. Thomas came to India in 52 A.D. – almost two centuries before Christianity took roots in Europe – he was given a royal welcome and given land to build the first church in Kodungaloor.

More than 19 centuries later (in 1964) Pope Paul VI observed on his visit to India:

"We might have stayed there like a stranger, isolated, and surrounded only by our brothers in faith, but on the contrary we met an entire people.." He added: "This country is not Catholic, but what courtesy, what opening of spirit, what an avid desire to get a glance or a word, from this strange traveller from Rome... That was a moment of understanding, of community of mind. We do not know what these rejoicing crowds saw in us, but we saw in the crowds a humanity of great nobility, identified with its millennial cultural traditions. These crowds were not all Christians, but they were profoundly spiritual and in so many ways so good and winning."

India has traditionally practiced harmony, respecting every religion and accepting the best in each one of them. That is why Christmas time is generally looked upon

throughout the country as one of peace, harmony and goodwill. That makes it easier for adherents of other faiths to accept the reality of Christ and rejoice with his followers, when they celebrate the birthday of the Saviour.



In the matter of celebrations and festivities, Indians have also a tendency to go overboard. Wholehearted participation in such celebrations also entails loud music, dancing and merriment to the accompaniment

of drums, cymbals and bells. Merriment thus becomes a tad loud and noisy and gay abandonment.

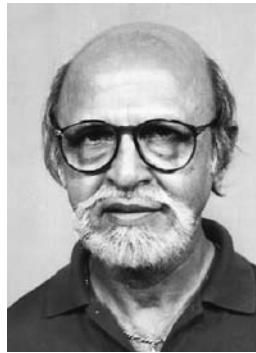
It also has come to connote in recent times a tendency towards crass commercialisation. It is a common complaint today that almost all the top pilgrim centres in the country have succumbed to the temptation of making profits. Piety and devotion today comes with a price tag. The rich can pay their way directly to the sanctum sanctorum bypassing thousands of devotees biding their time in long, winding queues. The offerings of the devout also are steeply priced.

The celebration of Christmas has also been affected in some measure by the vestiges of commercialism. Christmas greeting cards, effigies of Santa Claus, red velvet caps with tufts, rich festive food, feasts are all dominated by market forces. The principle of supply and demand forces prices upward during yule tide, robbing it of some of the divinity and sanctity that any religious ceremony demands.

It is, after all, the "profound spirituality" of the India people that Pope Paul VI noticed that still impel all of us to celebrate Christmas in the spirit in which it should be understood.

A Christmas Story for Our Troubled Times

-George Menezes



There must be hundreds of Hume pipes lying all over Mumbai. Gigantic concrete ones meant to be used for storm water drainage into the sea.

They are ideal as BMC-forgotten temporary, very temporary, housing for millions of homeless people who are merely a statistic for the powers that govern the city and a passing landscape for the well heeled people like you and me.

There is one such pipe, now frayed at its circumference near the road across where I live. In its benevolent radius, protected from rain and sun, lives a woman who could walk the ramp even in the ragged "saree" and "choli" that she washes under a garden tap or over a leaking pipe in the neighborhood.

She is dark, just the shade I like in women, large, sad eyes, small firm breasts, a determined jaw and she walks in the sensuous manner village women walk when they carry pots on their heads.

Amazing I thought for a woman who lived back-bent in a cylindrical home.

"We should sponsor a fashion show under the auspices of our Residents Association for these really beautiful, homeless women" I said to the members of our road committee.

They gave me a look dirtier than a garbage dump, took my spectacles off my nose, wiped them clean and said sarcastically, "age has not dimmed your weakness for village women"

What could I say? After all I am a boy from a village in Goa.

Her name was Namrata and she lived with Govind her five year old son. Her husband had been killed the previous Christmas in their village. She worked on

the construction site of a hotel that had been recently blown up by terrorists.

When his mother was away Govind played with a wooden doll which he carried all the time like some thing precious, keeping it hidden in his pocket when he played road side cricket with neighboring children from the hutments.

I stopped by the cylinder one day on my way to buy fish at the Chimbai fishing village. Must have been Namrata's day off, I thought foolishly.

"No" she said. "Govind was not feeling well. The burn scars on his face and hand were itching and bothering him". She spoke broken Hindi and even some broken English as if, once upon a time, she had studied in a convent school.

Govind sat up. He showed me the toy he was clutching to his breast. It was made of wood. Baby Jesus he said simply. A baby face on a fat body, carved by a carpenter whose tools needed sharpening. It had been burnt on one side like the doll I had seen when I visited the Best Bakery in Gujarat during the 2002 carnage.

"I see you watching me from your window" she said. "I am a writer and I am always curious and looking for a story" I said "especially since I see you and your little boy in Church sometimes".

"We are Christians" she said. "Converts from my grandfather's time". There was joy in her voice and it echoed in the Hume pipe that was her temporary home.

"I am from Kandhamal in Orissa. We lived on the edge of a beautiful forest full of wild birds, butterflies and animals. Last Christmas when the fanatics came they killed my husband and burnt down our house. We hid in the forest for months and then the refugee camp and recently Mumbai.

We are secure here but we miss Kandhamal. We are going back this Christmas.

"Baby Jesus will protect us" said Govind

I Wonder !



Sachin Nerulkar came to Fr. Agnel Balbhavan, in Vashi, two years ago from a Children's Home run by an NGO which cares for the abandoned children. He lived in that Home since he was a little baby.

He has known, neither a home of his own, nor siblings or parents. Now he lives in our Balbhavan round the year. He is one of our sweetest boys, who knows to give of himself and to receive for himself.

With a smile ever present on his face, he seems to live like he is blessed-a-plenty. You do him a little favour, like giving a tablet when he is sick, in return you will get not just a "thank you, sir" but also, a few days later, a "thank you card" especially made for you. Where does he get such a sense of gratitude, I often wonder !

Occasionally, Sachin will walk into my office with a sad face. I know then that he is upset about something. Mostly, it is because someone has wronged him, or because he does not agree with something that a teacher or a supervisor is asking him to do. In the first instance, he expects me to act justly, and if after investigating

25th December: The Birthday of the Unconquered one (Contd from pg 4)

same time it was adopted by the Church of Antioch, one of the most important centres of Christianity at that time.

Some Christian Churches continued to celebrate Christmas on their own traditional dates but in the course of years one by one all of them adopted the Roman custom of celebrating it on 25th December. As no one knew for sure the exact date of the birth of Christ it was for the Church to fix a common date for it. That is what the Church did and all the eminent persons in the Church supported the move. St. Cyprian says: "O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which the Sun was born ... Christ should be born; and St. John Chrysostom says: "But Our Lord too is born on 25th December. ...But they call

the situation, I find that Sachin had his share of blame in the situation, he willingly takes responsibility for it, apologizes, and goes his way. If the misgiving is related to a person of authority, I have to convince him that what he is being asked is reasonable. If my explanation makes sense to him, he will happily go out and oblige. If he is not satisfied with my explanation he will stand his ground and defend his view, until I convince him that what the teacher was demanding is right and good. Where and how does he get this sense of justice, I wonder!

When the dormitory or the bathroom needs cleaning, Sachin is ever-ready and willing to get on his knees and do the job. His love for work and his determination to do it well is seen in his body-language. He seems to be relishing the work. Where and how does he get this sense of work-ethic? I wonder!

Children can be masters of wise-living! And we sure can learn from them.

Like Sachin, I am fortunate to be around many little masters. How wholesome indeed, is the wisdom "from the mouth of the babes"

-Meneo Afonso

it: 'The Birthday of the Unconquered'. Who is indeed unconquered as Our Lord? Or, if they say that it is the birthday of the Sun, He is the Sun of Justice."

Today 25th December is universally accepted as the Birthday of Christ. However, the original spirit of Christmas has been greatly polluted. Worldly celebrations today are dominating the entire Christmas season. Excessive drinking, immodest dancing and gambling are incorporated as parts of Christmas fun. Is the Unconquered One to be conquered under the impact of the unrestricted licence at Christmas celebrations? Let us try to put Christ back in all our Christmas celebrations including the innocent fun and frolic which will express the true joy that Christ brought to the world.

Vision & Mission of Love

-Fr.Victor Rebello

***"For I was Hungry and you fed Me,
I was thirsty and you gave me to drink."***

H. W. Longfellow tells of a monk whose daily duty it was to give food and clothing to the poor at the monastery gate. One evening, a vision of Jesus appeared to him in his cell. The face and features were indistinct so that he even doubted if it were there; then it would glow a little. As he gazed with joy at the vision, the bell sounded the hour when the poor were waiting at the monastery gate. How could he leave now? What should he do - stay with his heavenly Visitor, or go to do his duty of distributing his service to the poor? He decided in favour of duty. He bade farewell to Jesus and went to relieve Jesus' poor.

Darkness fell before he finished and as he entered his cell he struck a light. The room was immediately filled with heavenly brightness. There stood Jesus not indistinct now but shining as the Sun smiling upon him with divine tenderness. Jesus spoke, "If you had not gone, I would have left indeed."

One part of our adoration of Jesus in the crib on Christmas is to help those who represent Jesus in the flesh around us. Jesus as Emmanuel announces the immense significance of the incarnation for a world that feels lost, alone and longs for a friend who will bring it understanding and direction. The name 'Emmanuel' makes us realize that God is with us as a human; by becoming a member of the human race Jesus brings God very close to us. He knows what it is to live and breathe, to eat and sleep, to be happy and sad, to be unwell and to die. Because of Christmas we can relate to God in a human way, confident that he understands our problems, needs



and struggles.

Down the corridor of time travelled a man whose life and spirit changed people's life and shaped the course of history as no other person has ever done. He came not as an emperor, but a low born person to the taste of poverty, sorrow and anguish. He grew up to be a revolutionary in reaching out to the

people with the truth and he revolutionized by transforming individuals. He said, "As I have loved you so you must love one another." Art galleries of the world have captured his life in paintings, libraries are lined with books embodying his thoughts and

hospitals and educational institutions are dedicated to his memory. He is the focus of controversy, the rallying point of unity and the object of love; the subject of debate, the basis of hope and the goal of lives.

He towers above the giants of history and to some he is an uneasy feeling in times of silence; to others he is a sunrise of hope in a night of darkness. To all he is a challenge. Reflecting on Jesus' presence in history, the poet, Crashaw was stirred and he wrote,

"Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span!"

Summer in Winter, Day in Night!
Heaven on earth, and God in man."

In this world of ours beautiful and challenging on one hand and oppressive and miserable on the other, humankind has always longed for a redeemer, for someone who can lead us out of misery and darkness to a land, where the goods of the world are shared and people can live together with and for one another.

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Commemorating 83rd Death Anniversary of Fr.Agnel

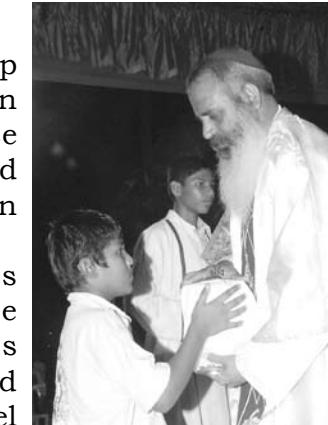
On 20th of November thousands of devotees from all walks of life flocked to the Shrine of Venerable Fr.Agnel at Agnel Ashram,Bandra to commemorate his 83rd death anniversary.

The highlight of the day was a solemn concelebrated Eucharist at the Ashram



Compound.
Rt.Rev. Bishop Thomas Macwan from the Diocese of Ahmedabad was the main celebrant.

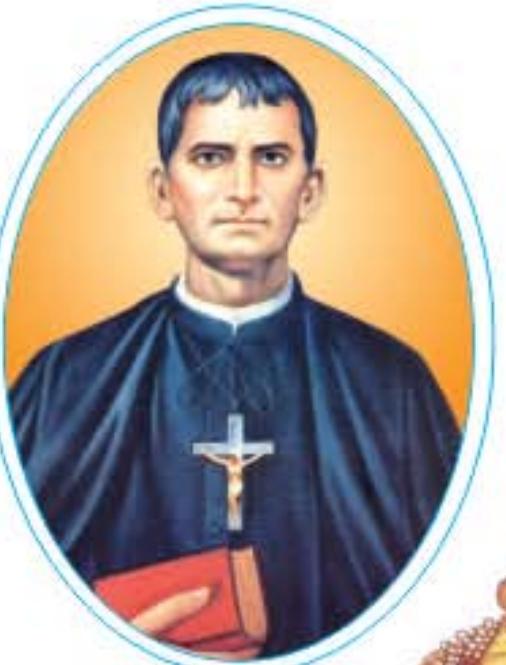
Delivering his homily at the Gospel His Lordship stressed that Ven. Fr.Agnel was a man of intense prayer life who would spend long hours before the Blessed Sacrament. He also reminded to the audience that only prayer leads us to stand firm in God. It's the power of intense prayer that invited God's presence in Fr. Agnel and it empowered him to be an anointed witness of the Risen Lord..



the commentary during the liturgical service and Master Amol proposed a vote of thanks. At the end, the newly formed Balbhavan Band entertained the large audience with excellent music.

Our special gratitude to Ms.A.Viegas,Ms. Nina Jacob and Mr. Vein for taking great pains to train our students.

Commemorating 83rd Death Anniversary of Fr. Agnel.



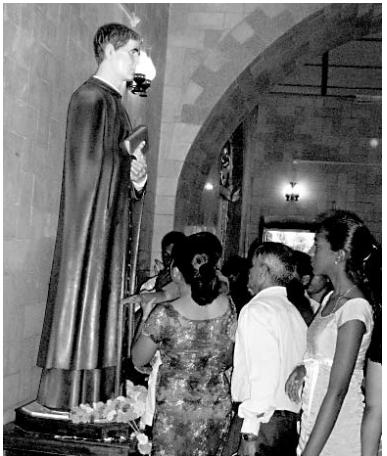
Simplicity was his powerful weapon:

Bishop Pius Dorairaj

“Simplicity was the powerful weapon which helped Venerable Fr Agnelo D’Souza come closer to God and men,” said Lawrence Pius Dorairaj, addressing devotees at the high mass to commemorate the 83rd death anniversary of Ven Agnelo at Pilar on November 27.

The auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Madras, Mylapore, Chennai, said, Fr Agnelo did not do anything spectacular from the ordinary point of view. A significant part of his life was spent in the pulpit. Yet, ever since he passed away 83 years ago, numerous miracles ranging from cures from grievous illness to seeking a child or a job have been taking place.”

Reflecting on Ven Agnelo’s life, Dorairaj said that even as a child the saint-in-waiting took the initiative of teaching catechism to small children as well as those older to him. Referring to Ven Agnelo’s mother, he said, “It takes a saintly mother to produce saintly sons.” “Fr Agnelo is a role model for those priests who want to preach the word of God with emphasis on the mysteries of the church,” stressed Dorairaj.



God for a “first-class miracle” that will help the Catholic Church to declare Ven Agnelo a saint soon.

Archbishop Patriarch Filipe Neri Ferrao presided over the celebration, accompanied by a host of priests. Every mass was followed by the prayer for the beatification of Ven Agnelo and special prayers over the sick.

-Pio Esteves

At the recently concluded Interschool State Table Tennis Tournament organized by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the Fr. Agnel u/16 boys team emerged as the champions. The tournament was held at M.J. College, Jalgaon on 28th and 29th of November 2010.



The Fr. Agnel team comprising of Dhawal Dedhiya, Chirag Shah, Somil Mehta, Preet Mota defeated Nasik in the Quarter finals 3:0. They went on to defeat Amravati in the Semifinals with the score again at 3:0. In the finals they defeated Pune 3:1 winning the tournament convincingly.

The Triumph Of The Paddlers

How the Process of Beatification Began

-P. A. D'Mello

Fr. Agnelo died, as we have seen, with a reputation for sanctity. All those who had personal relations with him – his colleagues in the Pilar Society, the professors, students and servants of the Seminary of Rachol and others, considered him a saint and after his death, this general opinion began to assert itself more emphatically. Further the numerous favours received through Fr. Agnelo’s intercession will help expedite the beatification process.

It was natural that this should make his numberless devotees hope that their friend and protector got the honours of the altar. Various requests to H.E. the Patriarch of the East Indies were made

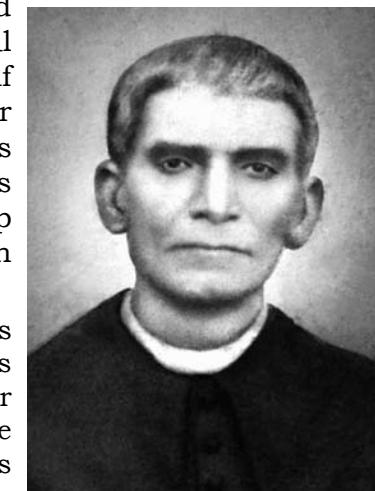
to see initiated the Process necessary for his eventual Beatification. The Seminary of Rachol whose Spiritual Director he had been, found itself naturally in the vanguard of this movement. The first request came from the students and professors of the Seminary for initiating the Informative Process of the Cause of Beatification.

One day a Committee appointed by them requested the Very Rev. Dr. Jeronimo Simao Freitas that he should forward to H.E. the Patriarch their request which had 500 signatures. The Rev. Rector not only acceded to this, but appended his own signature and forwarded the Petition to the Patriarch through the Secretariat of the Seminary. Gradually many requests were made to the Convent of Pilar for initiating the Processes.

In 1947, twenty years after the death of Fr. Agnelo the Missionary Society of Pilar took the first step in this direction, selecting and appointing a Postulator in Rome, Rev. Fr. Agostino della Vergine of the Order of the Holy Trinity who accepted the task willingly and appointed Rev. Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues, in Goa as Vice-Postulator.

In 1953, the Vice Postulator requested H.E.

the Patriarch of the Indies to nominate in Goa the Ecclesiastical Tribunal which would take up the cause. The Patriarch agreed immediately and the Archbishop Coadjutor of Goa himself Dom Jose Vieira Alvernaz offered to preside over this Tribunal. A edict was published on the same day February 7, 1953.



However, as new difficulties cropped up the First Process which had auspiciously commenced did not continue. In 1954 the Vice Postulator proceeded to Bombay and hence was unable to carry on the task of the Process. In the meantime Fr. Conceicao had already collected various letters of Fr. Agnelo, together with other writings, and further had secured from

those who had known Fr. Agnelo personally, important statements regarding his life and virtues. These statements were of great use in compiling his biography. Fr. Rodrigues himself realising that it was not possible for him to carry out the office of Vice-Postulator from Bombay, tendered his resignation on June 15, 1955. Since the Postulator in Rome too, was ill and he expressed his wish that another person be appointed to replace him, the Society of Pilar decided to restart the activities for the Cause by appointing a new Postulator and Vice-Postulator. The new Postulator appointed was Rev. Teodoro della Sacra Famiglia, on March 12, 1956 and he in turn nominated Rev. Dr. Protasio Soares as Vice-Postulator in Goa.

Another Diocesan Tribunal was constituted by the Patriarch, Dom Jose Vieira Alvernaz, on 13 April 1956 which assumed office the next day. Again two notifications were published ordering the collection of the writings of the Servant of God. The writings were presented to the Tribunal consisting of three Ecclesiastical Judges on 19 July 1956, and an authenticated copy of the same was forwarded to Rome.

(To be Continued...)



News from Our Missions

Advent Reflection

Delhi Province

Fr. Agnel Seminary - A New Home at Nazafgarh

We the scholastics of Delhi province embraced our new seminary home in the heart of Nazafgarh. The inaugural ceremony took place on the 2nd of July 2010, the Society's re-organization day.

Fr. Walter Gomes sfx, the chairman of the formation commission inaugurated the new building and Fr. Bento Rodrigues sfx the former Regional

Superior of Agnel Region, blessed it. This was then followed by a solemn Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Walter was happy and appreciated the Provincial Superior, Fr. Albert Fernandes sfx and his team for the hard efforts in erecting the building. All thanks to almighty God, who makes all things just magnificent.

Happy to be here...

Working together, playing together, praying together and singing together. These are the vital ingredients in creating a 'holly -jolly happy community'. At present that is what we are; a one



second thought brought to mind the greatness we have sought in Christ Jesus through our missionary vocation. We want to be focused on purpose for what we are come here – prepare ourselves to be pioneering missionaries and for that we are ready to open to every opportunity that knocks on our door.



*Wishing all our Dear Benefactors
A Happy and Holy Christmas
As well as a Prosperous New Year*

-Fr. Agnel Community and Balbhavan Children



Kolkota Province

Gangarampur Church celebrates Mother Teresa's Birth Centenary

The Parish of Gangarampur under the guidance and animation of its Paris

Priest Fr. Paul Fernandes, celebrated Mother Teresa's Birth Centenary on 26th September 2010. At a three hour Cultural Programme to mark the event, the Life and Ministry of Blessed Mother Teresa was highlighted on stage. Blessed Mother Teresa was closely associated and responsible for the birth of 'Boys Town.' Hence, the parishioners recalled and with gratitude celebrated her life

and Mission with immense Nostalgia. Fr. Shivaji Henriques, the Vicar Provincial was the Chief Guest and Sr. Adriann, MC, the Regional of the Missionaries of Charity at Kolkata was the Guest of Honour.

The highlight of the evening was a play entitled, "A Call Within A Call" which portrayed her childhood, vocation to Religious life and eventual discovery of the Call to serve the poorest of the poor.

Vision & Mission of Love (Contd. from pg8)

Learning to love God, means learning to love His world. God is something like the proud parent who says, "Love me, love my child." God says, "Love me, love my world." Perfect love of God doesn't mean that we love nothing but God; it means we love all in God. Like the monk in the story, being close to Jesus is to be full of deep concern and solicitude for all because he is a lover of God and His creation. Of all creatures, the one for whom we are most responsible is the human person; God's masterpiece, God's own image and likeness. This act of loving one's fellow is in fact the supreme means of growing in the love of God. Its the acid test of whether or not we really love God at all. "He who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar." Giving is the highest expression of potency. In the act of giving the human person experiences her/his own strength, wealth and power. This experience of heightened vitality fills her/him with joy.

Almost 2000 times, Christmas has

been celebrated and we shall celebrate it again. Everyone is preparing for it – the calendars mark it as a government holiday, the shopkeepers know well and they offer special Christmas discounts and offers, carol singing groups proclaim 'it's already days before, yet everything remains the same - hunger, poverty, selfishness, casteism, groupism, broken homes, lonely people, children with no smiles and then the season is over.

Hope is what Jesus ushers in by his birth; let us hope that something happens within us and around us this Christmas that brings a change. God gave us deep joy by becoming human - he has given dignity to every human person. He has brought the joyful awareness that every person is important and he always took up for those upon whom the society looked down the - outcaste. Christmas will be meaningful, if we who celebrate it live up to it, if this feast brings us back to the vision, the ideals of him, whose birthday we celebrate with joy and gladness.

*The earth has grown old with its burden of care But at Christmas it always
is young, The heart of the jewel burns lustrous and fair And its soul full of
music breaks the air, When the song of angels is sung."*

*~ Phillips Brooks (1835-93),
American Episcopal bishop, wrote 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'.*

Expectancy...Hope...Waiting

-Dr. Seby Mascarenhas

There is a chill in the air, though this year it is still raining! December was always my favourite month as a child, because Christmas was close by.

However, after my stay in Germany for my studies, though Christmas is still top of the list, somehow the celebration of Advent has really got me. Of course Christmas markets start much earlier than Advent in Germany- it is the best time for sales as Christmas opens hearts (aka purse strings).

But Advent was fascinating, specially the candlelit Rorate Masses in St. George Church, where I lived. In the winter dusk, our sacristian Mr. Brinkmann would switch off all the lights and light candles in every nook and corner in the Gothic style Church.

To me, it was heavenly: wintry dark outside, the reflected light of the candles up the steeples, the poignant silence as the people entered specially the Meier sisters...I could sense the spiritual. And the joy in the market sipping warm wine (Gluehwein)

I tried to live it out to some extent in the Pilar Seminary when I was Rector. We had our Rorate singing, led by Fr. Johnny, in candlelight, at least for the last seven days of Advent with the O antiphons. I loved it, I do not know about the seminarians, though some tell me now about it!

Advent is indeed a soothing time, that sometimes passes the priest by, because he is so involved in 'activities' for all and sundry. What a beautiful season, but one has no time to stand and stare.

Expectancy, Hope, Waiting ... You know it is the same story in every year ... And yet it is ever new. For Christmas is not about an observance. It is about an Experience.

What does that really mean? Teilhard de Chardin's words have struck a chord

in me this Advent and Christmas: we are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience. Christmas gives us this human experience, for the 'spiritual' itself becomes 'human'. The true characteristics of being spiritual are made palpable and visual to us when the Son becomes a son. The true meaning of our rootedness in Jesus and being led by the Spirit is shown by Jesus himself: when he mixes into the world at the incarnation, in order to make the world realise its true origin and goal.

Andrew Greeley puts it quite succinctly: "It might be easy to run away to a monastery, away from the commercialization, the hectic hustle, the demanding family responsibilities of Christmas-time. Then we would have a holy Christmas. But we would forget the lesson of the Incarnation, of the enfleshing of God—the lesson that we who are followers of Jesus do not run from the secular; rather we try to transform it. It is our mission to make holy the secular aspects of Christmas just as the early Christians baptized the Christmas tree. And we do this by being holy people—kind, patient, generous, loving, laughing—no matter how maddening is the Christmas rush..."

That is what I would wish for myself. I cannot avoid the rush and the preparations; but could I not make place for the quiet, the calm, by setting time every day? Perhaps I could be consciously gentler, friendlier, softer, smilier in the very rush...

I guess you do not have to really strain yourself...let the spirit of Advent carry you, let the strains of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" play in your mind. And you actually become what Advent beckons you to be.

Have a Joyfully Holy Advent

-Courtesy Paschimvanni



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

CURED OF BACK PAIN

Ahmednagar: I was suffering from back pain and the doctor advised an operation. However, he had doubts about the success of the operation and said it would be a miracle if I could walk. I was much worried and decided not to go for the operation. I was in bed for 3 months and my mother asked me to pray to Ven.Fr.Agnel for his help and I am happy to say that through his blessings I was cured without any operation and now I am able to walk. Today I came to the Ashram to pay homage with an offering of ₹ 200.

-Philomina Baburao Sathe

GIFT OF A CHILD

Bandra: After 6 years of marriage we had no issue. We prayed to Ven.Fr.Agnel and through his powerful intercession we are now blessed with a child. Our grateful thanks to Ven.Fr.Agnel with an offering of ₹ 1000.

-Cyril & Merella Mathias

CURED WITHOUT OPERATION

Kandivali: My 3 years old child had to undergo a major tooth operation. I was much worried. I started praying to Ven. Fr.Agnel for 9 Sundays and consulted another doctor who started treatment for my son. My son is now cured without undergoing any operation. I am very grateful to Ven.Fr.Agnel.

-Chandrika Patel

MULTIPLE FAVOURS

Vikhroki : By the grace of Ven.Fr.Agnel I have received the following favours :
1) My son secured a good job in Godrej but was not interested in working. I prayed to Ven.Fr.Agnel and through his blessings he goes to work regularly
2) My two sons were acting indifferent with me and there was unhappiness at home. Here I sought the blessings of Ven.Fr.Agnel and now we have peace

and good relations at home. 3) My son was not willing to get married. Through Ven.Fr.Agnel's blessings he has changed his mind and will be getting married soon. I am grateful to Ven.Fr.Agnel for his help and blessing.

-Meena K.Prajapati

SECURED JOB

Vasai: I was praying to Ven.Fr.Agnel for his help. I am happy to say that through his intercession. I Secured a job and many other wishes were fulfilled. In thanksgiving an offering of ₹ 1200.

-Brenal Gonsalves

GIFT OF A CHILD

Dhule: We were married for three years but had no issue. I prayed fervently to Ven.Fr.Agnel and through his intercession we are now blessed with a baby boy. My grateful offering of ₹ 500.

- Nalini B.Xavier

PAYMENT OF ALL DUES RECEIVED

Nigeria: My family and I are great devotees of Ven.Fr.Agnel for many years, and we have received numerous favours through his blessings. I was working in Nigeria and unfortunately the company closed down due to the global recessions. I lost my job and to add to my woes I was not paid any dues by the company. I sought the powerful intercession of Ven.Fr.Agnel and I soon got a good job. Although 4 years had passed my old company did not pay me my dues despite several appeals. I continued praying to Ven.Fr.Agnel and through his blessings I am happy to say that my former company paid me all my dues. Today I come to the Ashram with my family to pay our homage and express my profound gratitude to Ven. Fr.Agnel with an offering of ₹ 2,29,000.

-Mahesh Kapadia

Out of Their Bounty

P. Srivastava	Mumbai	35000	J. Agnelo	Mumbai	2000	R. Dass	Secunderabad	500
M.M. Bulbulia	Mumbai	25000	L. Jose	Kerala	500	J. Vincent	Kerala	500
T. R. Ranilal	Mumbai	11111	Subramanian R.	Mumbai	2000	A.A. Jyoti	A.P.	500
B. Trivedi	Mira Road	11000	V. V. Wilankar	Mumbai	3100	C. Crasto	Kerala	500
N.B. Vajani	Mumbai	10001	D. C. Chhatpar	Mumbai	1000	A. Jacob	Kerala	1250
S.B. Gondal	Gujarat	500	H.R. Waghela	Surat	1100	R. Dennis	T.N.	1000
R.C. Chitalia	Mumbai	1001	A. K. Paranjpe	Mumbai	6000	P. Pinto	Karnataka	500
J.L. D'Souza	Pune	2000	C.R. Paul	Kerala	1100	K.R. Prasad	A.P.	500
A.C. Leo	Mumbai	1000	G. Veeramani	Chennai	500	S.S. Solanki	Ahmedabad	5000
S. Thelly	Kerala	500	D.S. Desai	Mumbai	5000	A. Martis	Delhi	500
R.B. Bharda	Gujarat	1000	S. Arputham	T.N.	1000	B. Varghese	Delhi	600
T. Philipose	Kerala	5000	Stanly & Lita	Mumbai	1000	M. Serrao	Bangalore	500
K.K. Karkaria	Mumbai	2202	F.M. Lewis	Kolkata	7000	A.T. Elavia	Surat	500
S. John	Kerala	1500	V.James	Kerala	1000	S. Inigo	T.N.	500
P. Thomas	Kerala	500	F. Suares	Kuwait	4000	B. Doloi	Kolkata	500
V. George	Kerala	1000	K. Asher	Mumbai	1500	C.P. Salvi	Pune	1500
N.O. Bhatta	Mumbai	1000	K. Hari	Chennai	1000	I. Santineer	Chennai	1300
C. Caldeira	Pune	500	B.V. Nagarkar	Vasai	1000	M. Sunny	Kerala	1000
G. Joseph	Kerala	1000	A.V. Traders	T.N.	1000	A.C. Paulose	Kerala	1000
Z. Bharucha	Vasai	Vasai	C. Edgar	Kolkata	2400	F.R. Mistry	Pune	810
Dr.J. Jones	Mumbai	2000	N.R. Kothari	Mumbai	1500	P.J. Fernandes	Dhule	500
C.J. Antony	Kolkata	5000	A. Augustine	Kerala	7400	L. Santosh	Pune	500
P. Eustachius	Nagpur	600	C. Thomas	Kerala	500	A.J. Lancelot	Nagpur	500
D. Rebello	Mangalore	2000	D. Issac	Kerala	500	V. D'Souza	Karnataka	500
A. Fernandez	Kolkata	1000	T.N. Dhingra	New Delhi	1100	R. Joseph	Kerala	500
Dhanya Nair	Thane	500	R. Ambekar	Mumbai	2000	M. Sebastian	Kerala	500
A. George	New Delhi	1000	W.A. D'Silva	Mumbai	5000	R. Lobo	Mangalore	500
J. Jaipaul	Chennai	500	L. Fernandes	Gujarat	1500	K. Xavier	Bangalore	500
K.J. Jose	Kerala	1000	R.C. Pachickara	Mumbai	3200	S. Abraham	Uttarakhand	500
Techno Products	Chennai	1000	M.D. Gandhi	Virar	501	L. Dasan	Kerala	500
P. Gomes	Kolkata	1000	A. Foran	Kolkata	5000	S. Antony	Kerala	500
A. George	Kerala	500	J. Jose T.	Kerala	1000	A. Lobo	Bangalore	500
A. Pinto	Mumbai	500	A.R. Wadia	Mumbai	501	S.M. Naidu	Pune	500
L. Joseph	Kerala	500	V. Varghese	New Delhi	500	L. George	Modasa	500
P.R. Thakkar	Mumbai	5000	C. D'Souza	Mangalore	555	O.V. Kurien	Kerala	500
S. Ramaswamy	Mumbai	2000	N.M. Paulose	Kerala	500	A. Thomas	Kerala	500
M. John	Kerala	2000	K.S. Raphael	Kerala	500	S.I. Parmar	Gujarat	2500
G.M. D'Souza	Mumbai	3000	S.L. Manilal	Mumbai	4000	P. Alvin	Karnataka	1200
V.C. Roy	T.N.	1000	Urvi Agency	Bhayandar	4000	S. Noronha	Kerala	1000
R. A. Shaimoo	Kerala	1000	S.V.S. Rama Rao	Mumbai	1000	J. Roach	T.N.	1000
U.G. Prabhakar	Mumbai	1001	Jose T.K.	Kerala	1001	A. Rodrigues	Pune	1000
R. Hingorani	Mumbai	1100	R.V. Singpurwalla	Mumbai	501	S. Aprem	Kerala	500
J.L. D'Souza	Pune	2000	Thomas G.	Kerala	500	M.N. Kadam	Ahmednagar	500
S. Selvappan	T.N.	600	R. K. Pirankar	Kenya	885	B. Alex	Kerala	500
G. Menezes	Udupi	2000	A. Cherian	Abu Dhabi	2000	P. Xavier	T.N.	500
D.S. S. Kumari	A.P.	500	H. D'Cruz	Malaysia	5775	A.R. Mary	T.N.	500
Dr.M. Kharde	Vasai	1300	S. John	Kerala	1600	R. Joseph	Jabalpur	500
R. D'Souza	Thane	500	K.B. Shirke	Kolhapur	1000	A. Lasrado	Mangalore	2500
A. Mascarenhas	Thane	500	A. Thaikattil	Kerala	601	A. John	Kerala	500
J.V. Francis	Ranchi	500	R. Zacharias	Kerala	500	V. Pijwala	Bakrol	1000
H.A. D'Souza	Mumbai	1000	S. Simon	Kerala	500	A. Varghese	Kerala	500
M. Tibrewala	Nashik	6000						



A page specially for
the young minds and
hearts.

BALBHAVAN MIRACLES

My life in Bal Bhavan



Without any doubt, I can say that I live in paradise or may be much more than that

I came to Bal Bhavan in 2003, which I feel is the luckiest year of my whole life because it was good to start with love and care. It is the hard effort of my dearest Aunty "Rose Mary" who sacrificed a lot for me and whose care and concern has brought me to this stage. At first when I joined this institute I felt a great joy when on the very first day Fr. Bento asked me to play an instrument for the Mass. I am very crazy about music, and that's how after coming to this place I got lots of opportunities to learn more and more music instruments.

Students are given care at every stage, resolving their problems, small matters, no religious bar, equal treatment, counseled when stressed, silence day, are few things that we have at this place.

Today I am really grateful to my aunty Rose Mary, Fr. Carvalho and Fr. Bento whose positive decisions, love, care and passion helped me complete my +2 and get into the College of Hotel Management. I am also grateful to all the wardens who came in my life inspired me and encouraged me.

I am determined not to waste time in worrying about what might happen, but to invest my time in working and making things happen.

-VICTOR JOHN



I came to Bal Bhawan on a fine day of June 2000, without the slightest clue of what life had in store for me. But now, as a matter of fact, I know this Bal Bhawan is what God had wrapped up as a beautiful gift for me which I could ever imagine.

I give my sincere gratitude to all the people who run this institute selflessly and lovingly. If I'm even asked to repay what this institute has done for me, not even in my dream of insanity would I be able to give back what I have received from here.

I grew up here learning ABC and about life, to mould myself into a good human being with all my brothers and sisters who are always caring in my times of sorrow and happiness, sharing every bit - starting from clothes to food- which could be even half eaten. They are the most wonderful people God could have gifted me to share my life with.

Through all of my life, name it - summer, winter, spring, and fall of my life, all I ever will recall of my life is all of my life in Balbhawan. I am in class-XII.

All this is possible just by the grace of God. All praise to the Lord with all my heart.

-SHANG NUNG

Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas."

-Peg Bracken.

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Ph: 022-26423841, 022-26423842
email: jobanor@rediffmail.com